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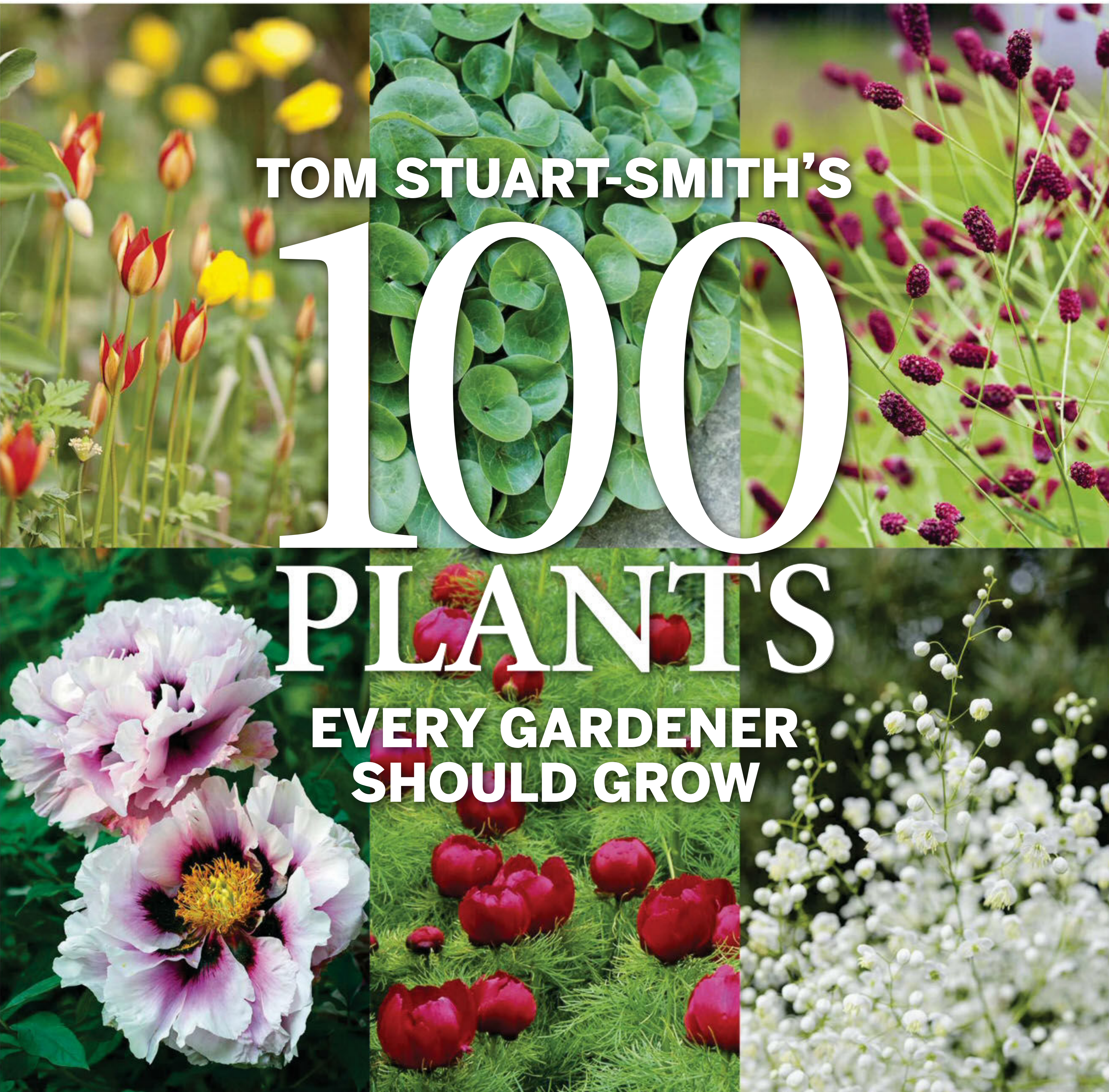

TOM STUART-SMITH'S

100 PLANTS

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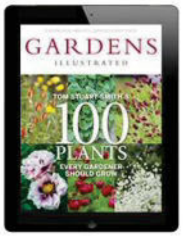
editor's letter

I love watching the seasons unfold, but by February I have to admit that I'm eager for spring to come. What better way to spend your enforced time indoors than dreaming of what to grow in the coming year? I am delighted that landscape architect and designer Tom Stuart-Smith has written this year's feature on his 100 Favourite Plants. He set himself the challenge of choosing only those that he had grown himself at home – and kept to his self-imposed rule, bar just a couple of exceptions (*Magnolia* 'David Clulow' and *Iris* 'Benton Daphne'). Tom, who is renowned for his intelligent and beautifully executed designs, once said that being an "outsized specimen" himself (he's six foot five) he has penchant for plants that grow tall and fast. Snowdrops are one of the highlights of February and although diminutive in stature can spread readily. Each year I make a point of going on a country walk that takes in a remarkable old drovers' lane where thousands upon thousands of snowdrops tumble down the banks. To find out the best snowdrops for naturalising, Mary Keen visits John Sales at his garden in Gloucestershire. John, who worked as the National Trust's chief gardens adviser for 25 years, is passionate about snowdrops, growing around 250 named cultivars, so is a great source of advice. Further afield, Anna Pavord explores La Foce, one of most romantic gardens in Italy, and discusses architect Cecil Pinsent's clever design for this historic Tuscan estate. Musing on great plants, good design, and a spot of sunshine – now that's a fine way to get through winter. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Juliet



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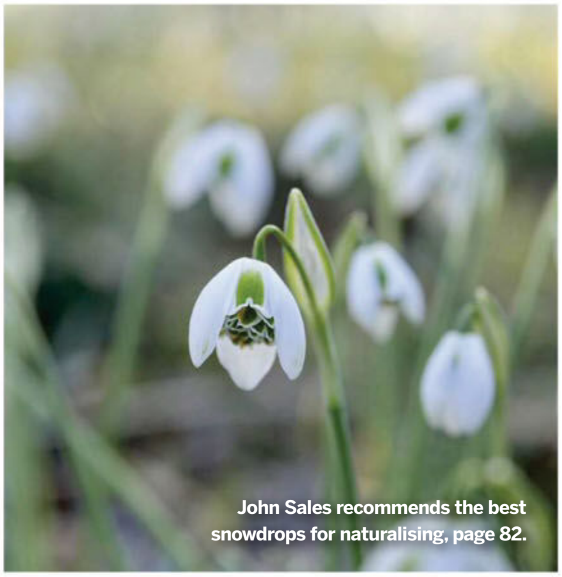
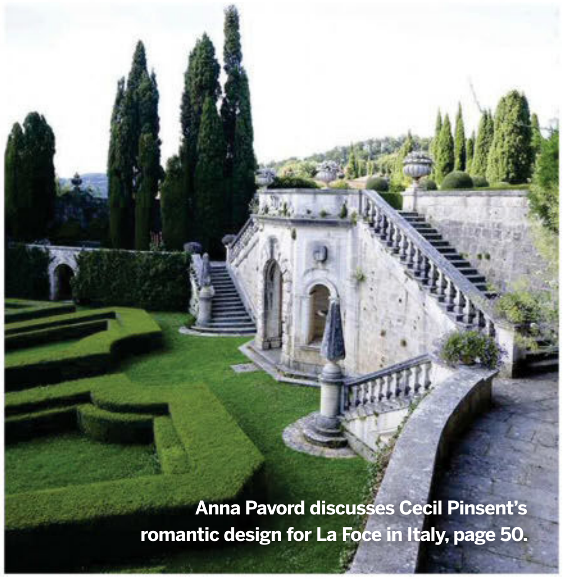


John Sales recommends the best snowdrops for naturalising, page 82.



Anna Pavord discusses Cecil Pinsent's romantic design for La Foce in Italy, page 50.

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Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

JASON INGRAM, SIETSKE DE VRIES

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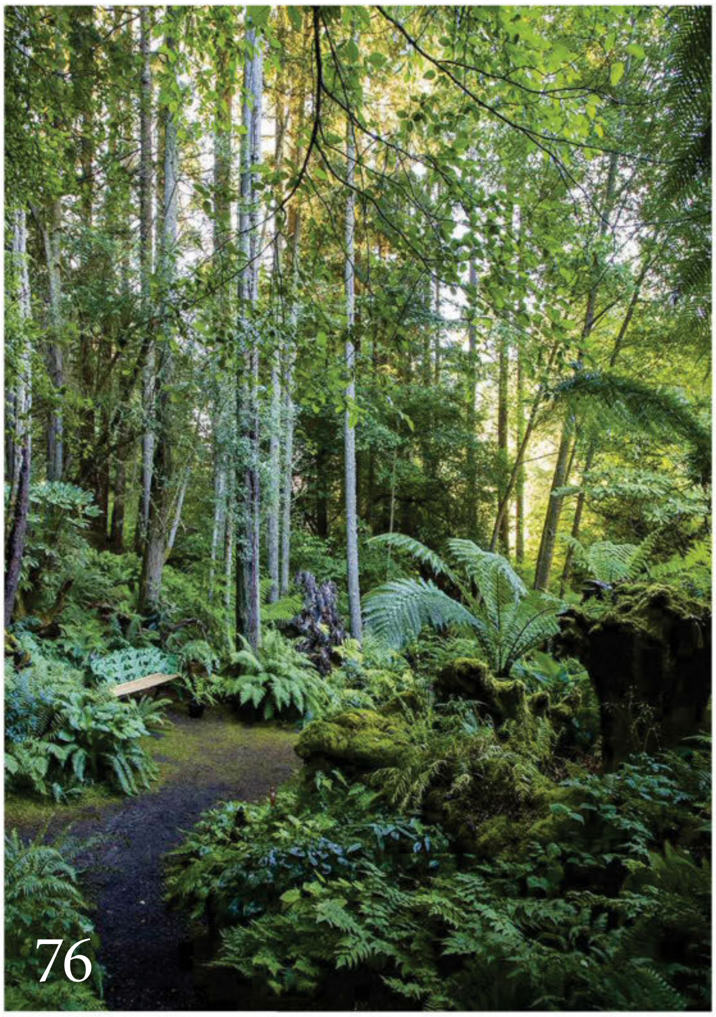

CLAIRE TAKACS, ALEX RAMSAY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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82 **On the wild side** Former chief gardens adviser at the National Trust, John Sales believes naturalising snowdrops is the key to creating beautiful displays that stay healthy for longer

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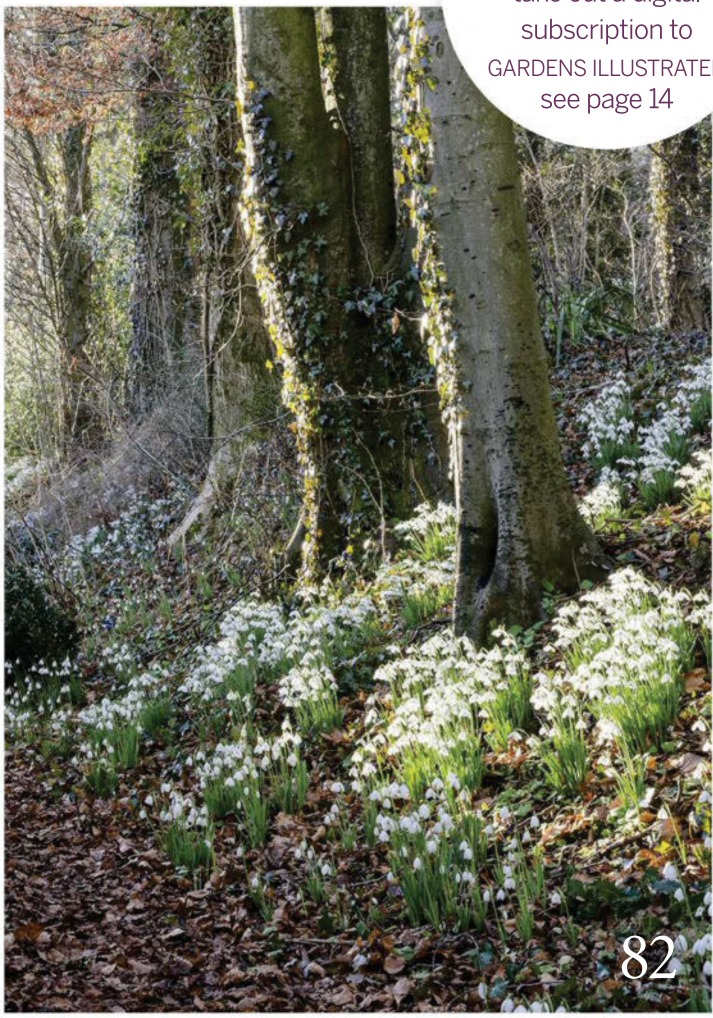

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- Join our tour of the **Gardens of Norfolk and Suffolk** with John Hoyland – page 12
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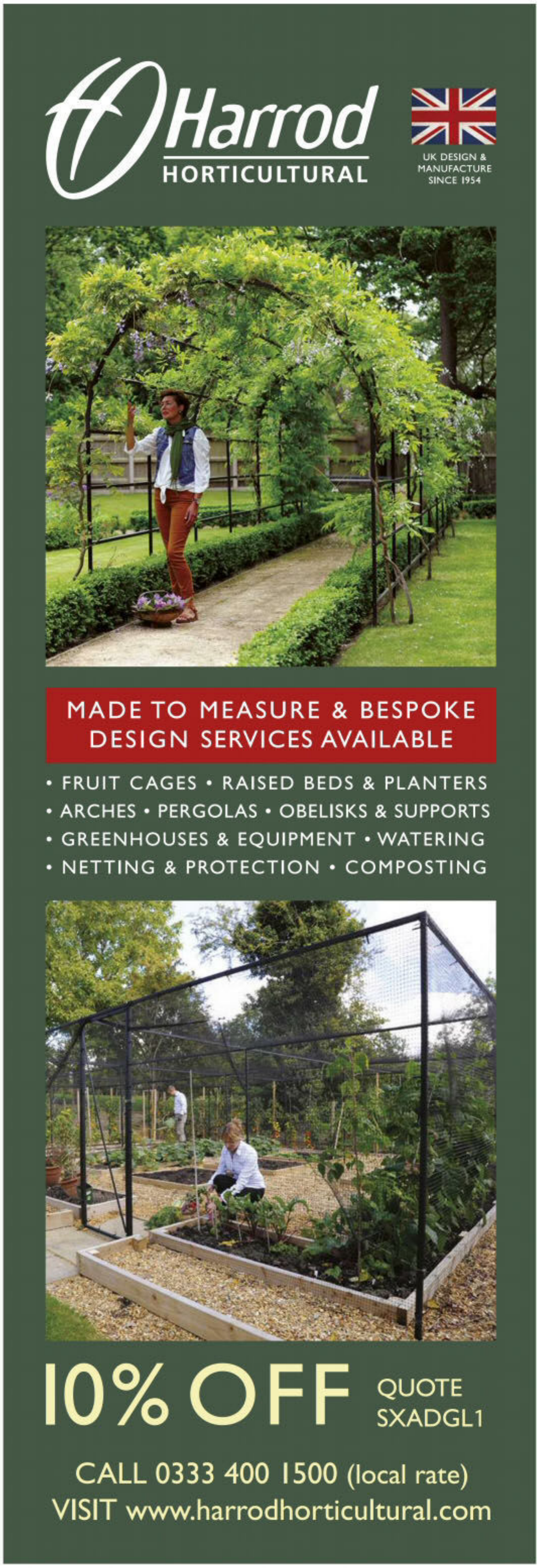
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contributors

BUNNY GUINNESS

Bunny has been designing gardens and commercial spaces for more than 40 years. As well as writing a weekly column in the *Sunday Telegraph* she has been a BBC Radio 4 *Gardeners' Question Time* panellist for 16 years. On page 66 she suggests some great plants for hedging.

"I love using hedges – they're perfect for framing and creating spaces, but also add personality and shelter for wildlife."

EVA VERMANDE

TOM STUART-SMITH

Tom studied zoology at Cambridge before switching to landscape design. He has created gardens at Trentham, RHS Wisley, Windsor Castle and the Royal Academy of Arts, and is the winner of eight Chelsea gold medals. On page 37 he lists his 100 favourite plants.

"I have chosen plants I grow in my own garden that I have lived with for some time; most of them I think of as old friends."

JASON INGRAM

MARY KEEN

Mary is a garden designer, the author of five books and writes a regular garden column in *The Telegraph*. Her favourite project remains her own garden, but on page 82 she visits that of her neighbour John Sales to discover which are the best snowdrops for naturalising.

"John Sales is a gardening sage and his garden is exemplary. Literally. A visit at any season is a cheery prospect."

KATIE EASTON

VALERIE EASTON

Valerie is a garden columnist for the *Seattle Times*. She's written five gardening books, and contributes to *Dwell* and *Garden Design* magazines. She's adding healing elements to her garden, when she isn't teaching yoga. On page 76 she visits a stumpery near Seattle.

"Three white poodles running through the Riehls' shady stumpery was an enchanting sight – I've been planting ferns ever since."

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30 APRIL - 6 MAY 2016

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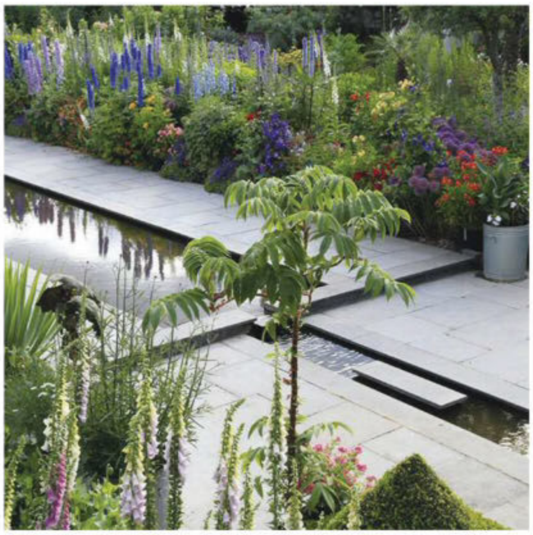

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Fly from London to Cape Town where we will be based for the first three nights. Here we will enjoy a cable car to the top of Table Mountain, whose flora encompasses some 1470 species including South Africa's national flower, the Protea. We will have a full day at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, truly one of the world's top gardens, where we will have an exclusive guided tour. We continue with a visit to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve where we should see an array of wild flowers.

We then begin our tour around the Western Cape by travelling north to the small town of Clanwilliam in time to visit the annual Flower Show. (The later departure date will coincide with the Darling Flower Show). We will also be guided through the wildflower lands of Cederberg, Niewoudtville and the Biedouw Valley.

Our journey continues through the lesser known West Coast National Park and the small town of Darling. Wildflowers, wild birds, stunning scenery and wine tastings – all that is good about the Western Cape is there to be enjoyed.

At Karoo National Botanical Gardens we will enjoy its wide variety of desert and semi desert plants along with its large succulent collection. We will then wind our way at a relaxing pace via a most interesting charitable project at Flower Valley and thence to Hermanus and the coast once more. Here we should be in perfect time to see the spectacle of the Southern Right Whale migration.

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- 13 nights' accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis: three nights at the Cape Town Hollow Hotel; two nights at the Piekenierskloof Resort; one night at the Buffelsfontein Game Reserve; two nights at the Cumberland Hotel, Worcester; two nights at the Windsor Hotel, Hermanus; three nights at the Stellenbosch Hotel (or similar)
- Dinner and welcome drink on the first evening plus three additional dinners
- Scheduled return flights from London Heathrow to Cape Town (regional flight connections and flight upgrades available at a supplement)
- Exclusive guided tour of Kirstenbosch
- Visits to Table Mountain, the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, Clanwilliam Flower Show/Darling Flower Show, wine tastings and wildflower botanising, private garden visits of Klein Openhorst, Karoo Botanic Gardens, Harold Porter, Vergelegen, Babylonstoren and Arderne Gardens; whale watching boat trip
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Exclusive Reader Events 2016

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***Gardens Illustrated* Talk**
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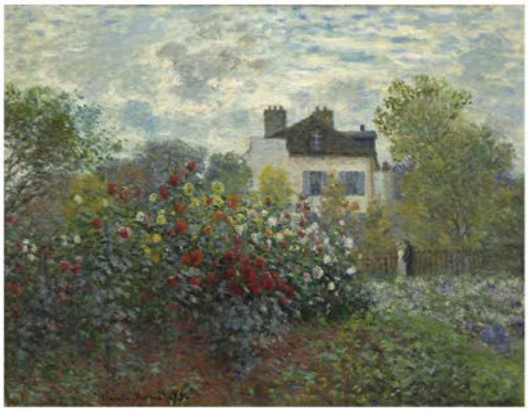
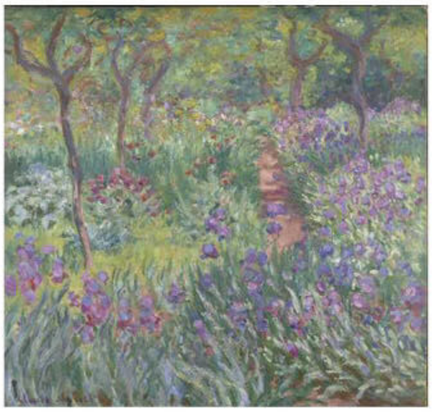
The Artist's Garden in Argenteuil (A Corner of the Garden with Dahlias), 1873, by Claude Monet.





The Artist's Garden at Giverny, 1900, by Claude Monet.

Wednesday 30 March 2016

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse

Join us at the Royal Academy of Arts for an exclusive viewing of this landmark exhibition, tracing the role of gardens in the evolution of art from Monet to Matisse

We are delighted to be able to offer readers of *Gardens Illustrated* (joined by readers from *Homes & Antiques* magazine) exclusive access to the Royal Academy of Arts exhibition *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse*.

Using the work of Monet as a starting point, this landmark exhibition examines the role gardens have played in the evolution of art from the early 1860s through to the 1920s. Monet, arguably the most important painter of gardens in the history of art, once said he owed his painting 'to flowers'. But Monet was far from alone in his fascination with the horticultural world; the exhibition also features masterpieces by Renoir, Cezanne, Pissarro, Manet, Sargent, Kandinsky, Van Gogh, Matisse, Klimt and Klee.

Your evening begins with a complimentary drink and talk from art historian and Royal Academy expert guide Graham Greenfield, who will explain the exhibition's background and key moments. You'll then have the opportunity to view the paintings at your leisure and, as numbers to this event are limited, access will be far easier.

- For details about the exhibition itself go to royalacademy.org.uk

Exhibition sponsored by BNY Mellon, partner of the Royal Academy of Arts.

Event details

- **Date** Wednesday 30 March 2016.
- **Venue** Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BD.

PROGRAMME

- **6.30pm** Arrive, drinks served.
- **7pm** Introductory talk by Royal Academy expert.
- **7-9pm** View the exhibition at your leisure.
- **8.45pm** Wine bar closes.

TICKETS

- **£26.50 per person. Cost includes:** Entry to exhibition, glass of wine or soft drink on arrival, introductory talk, gallery guide leaflet, audio guide, 10% discount at the RA Shop and combined *Gardens Illustrated* and *Homes & Antiques* goody bag.

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Image credits, left: Claude Monet, *The Artist's Garden in Argenteuil (A Corner of the Garden with Dahlias)*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 61 x 82.5 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington. Gift of Janice H. Levin, in Honour of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art, inv. 1991.27.1 Photo © Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington. Right: Claude Monet, *The Artist's Garden at Giverny*, 1900. Oil on canvas, 89.5 x 92.1 cm Yale University Art Gallery, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, B.A. 1929, L.H.D.H 1967. Photo © Yale University Art Gallery
Exhibition co-organised by the Royal Academy of Arts and the Cleveland Museum of Art

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There are many great gardens dotted along the Côte d'Azur between St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat and the border with Italy. Along with famous artists, many gardeners were drawn to the Riviera, attracted by both its climate and its beauty. Simon Monckton, who lived for many years on the Riviera, leads the tour.

Based at the 4★ Hôtel Napoléon in Menton, we visit the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild in St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, as famous for its art collection as for the nine beautiful gardens, and the Villa Kerylos, a contemporary, stylish recreation of a classical villa. In Menton, we visit the Val Rahmeh garden, as well as Lawrence Johnston's garden, Serre de la Madonne and in Monaco we see the principality's collection of succulents at the Jardin Exotique. Across the border in Italy we visit the famous Hanbury garden at La Mortola and Ursula Piacenza's private garden, the Villa Piacenza Boccanegra.

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FIVE NIGHT HOLIDAYS | 9 MAY & 19 SEPTEMBER 2016

Our new tour will explore a wonderful selection of villas and gardens in the countryside around Rome as well as some in the city itself. We stay at the very comfortable 4★ Park Hotel Villa Grazioli in Frascati, a charming town surrounded by vineyards only 20 kilometres from Rome.

The countryside surrounding Rome is home to a number of wonderful gardens including the beautiful and romantic gardens of La Landriana and Ninfa. A day will be devoted to Tivoli with its two great gardens: the Villa D'Este and Hadrian's Villa and another to Rome itself where we will visit the Villa Borghese Gardens and Gallery and a private garden. We also visit the Villa Lante – one of the greatest of all Italian Renaissance gardens and the gardens of the Villa Farnese.

Price from £1,497 for five nights including return flights, transfers, accommodation with breakfast, three dinners, two lunches all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Lecturer.

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Our tour is based at the 4★ Hotel Terminus, in the lakeside town of Como. We visit idyllic Bellagio, explore the gardens at the Villa Carlotta and the Villa Balbianello and have lunch at the luxurious Villa D'Este. A day is spent at at Stresa, the principal town on the shores of Lake Maggiore, from where we shall visit the beautiful Borromean Islands by boat.

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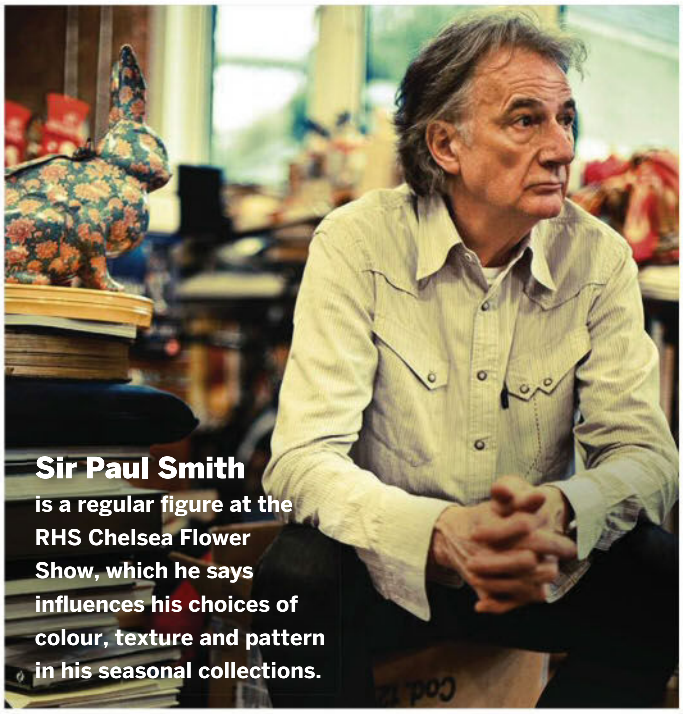

Sir Paul Smith is a regular figure at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, which he says influences his choices of colour, texture and pattern in his seasonal collections.

Luciano Giubbilei Italian-born Luciano came to England in 1994 to study garden design. His international practice designs gardens characterised by the beauty of their spatial arrangement.

Tuesday 24 May 2016

Gardens Illustrated Talk

Join us at the Royal Geographical Society in London for an inspirational discussion between fashion designer Sir Paul Smith and garden designer Luciano Giubbilei

When Luciano Giubbilei first met world-renowned fashion designer Sir Paul Smith at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2011, it was a meeting that was to set Luciano on a new path in his design career. For our talk Luciano and Sir Paul will look back at the effects of that meeting and explore what for them are key relationships between fashion, plants, flowers and design.

Book now for Standard and Premium tickets. All tickets are allocated seating with Premium ticket holders seated in the front section of the lecture theatre. Premium guests also receive a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne on arrival as well as a *Gardens Illustrated* goody bag.

Talk details

- **Date** Tuesday 24 May 2016.
- **Venue** Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR.

PROGRAMME

- **6pm** Doors open – cash bar available. Premium ticket holders will be served a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne.
- **7-8.15pm** Talk including Q&A.
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Gardens Illustrated reserves the right to replace any of the speakers with other speakers of equal stature in the unlikely event that either of them are unable to attend. Tickets must be booked in advance. Please let us know when booking of any special access requirements. Tickets are non refundable. Driving to the lecture is not advised. Nearest London Underground station is South Kensington.

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Tour leader
John Hoyland is a plantsman, garden writer and former nursery owner with an extensive knowledge of plants and gardens both in the UK and abroad.

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Corpusty Mill Garden.

Swan Hotel, Lavenham.

Silverstone Farm.

Columbine Hall.

Booking details

- **Price** £2,269 per person, based on two people sharing (single supplement of £250 levied by the hotels). The price includes two nights at 4-star The Swan Hotel, Lavenham, and two nights at Titchwell Manor near Brancaster; four evening meals with wines, and five lunches; transport from Cambridge Railway Station.

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An Englishman's masterpiece
Writer Iris Origo longed for a verdant, pretty garden at La Foce in arid, windswept southern Tuscany. English landscape architect Cecil Pinsent made it a reality
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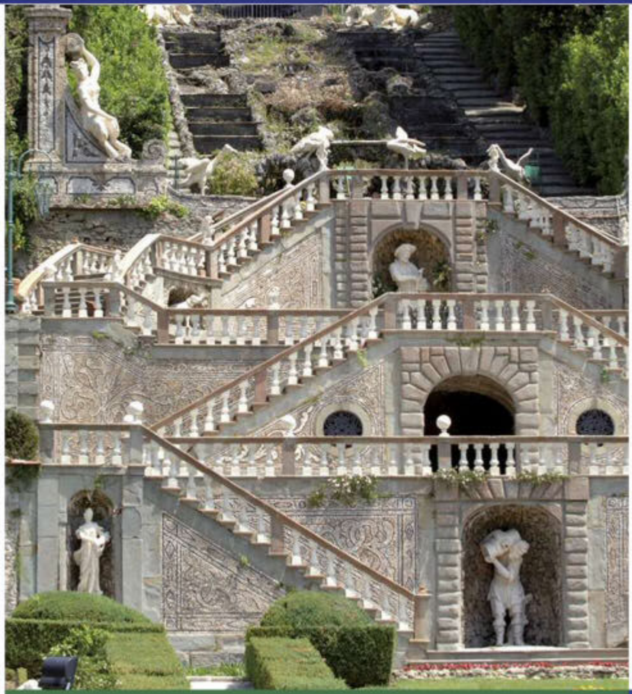

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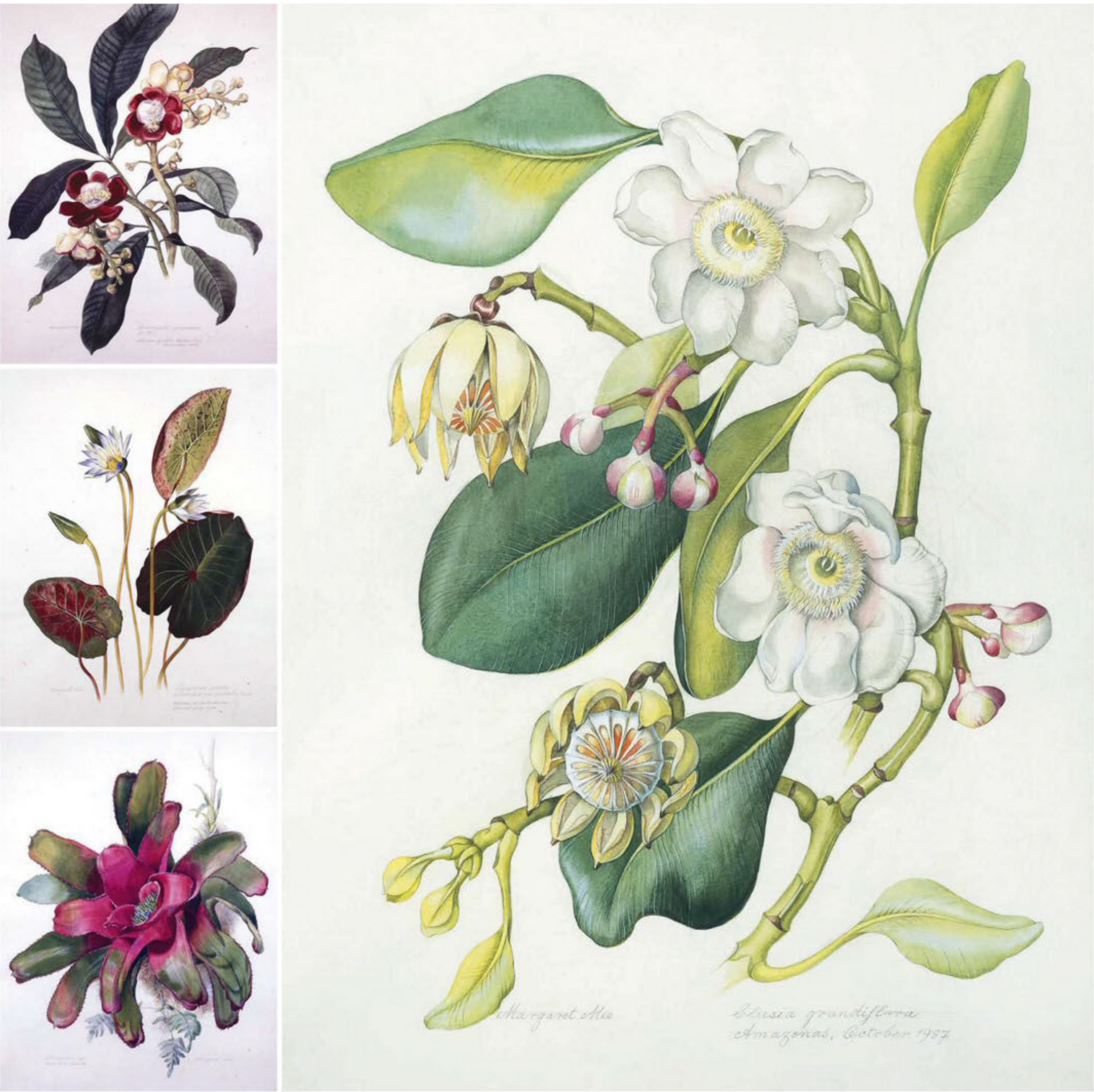

EXHIBITION

Brazilian beauties

Discover the breadth and beauty of Brazil's exotic flora in Brazil: A Powerhouse of Plants, a new exhibition at Kew's Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art that highlights the pioneering work of the late British explorer and botanical artist, Margaret Mee. Although the focus is paintings by Mee (including the selection shown above), the exhibition also includes works by contemporary Brazilian artists and old masters from Kew's collection, including drawings by Sydney Parkinson of plants collected by the naturalist Joseph Banks on Cook's first HMS *Endeavour* voyage in 1768–1771. **20 February – 29 August, kew.org**

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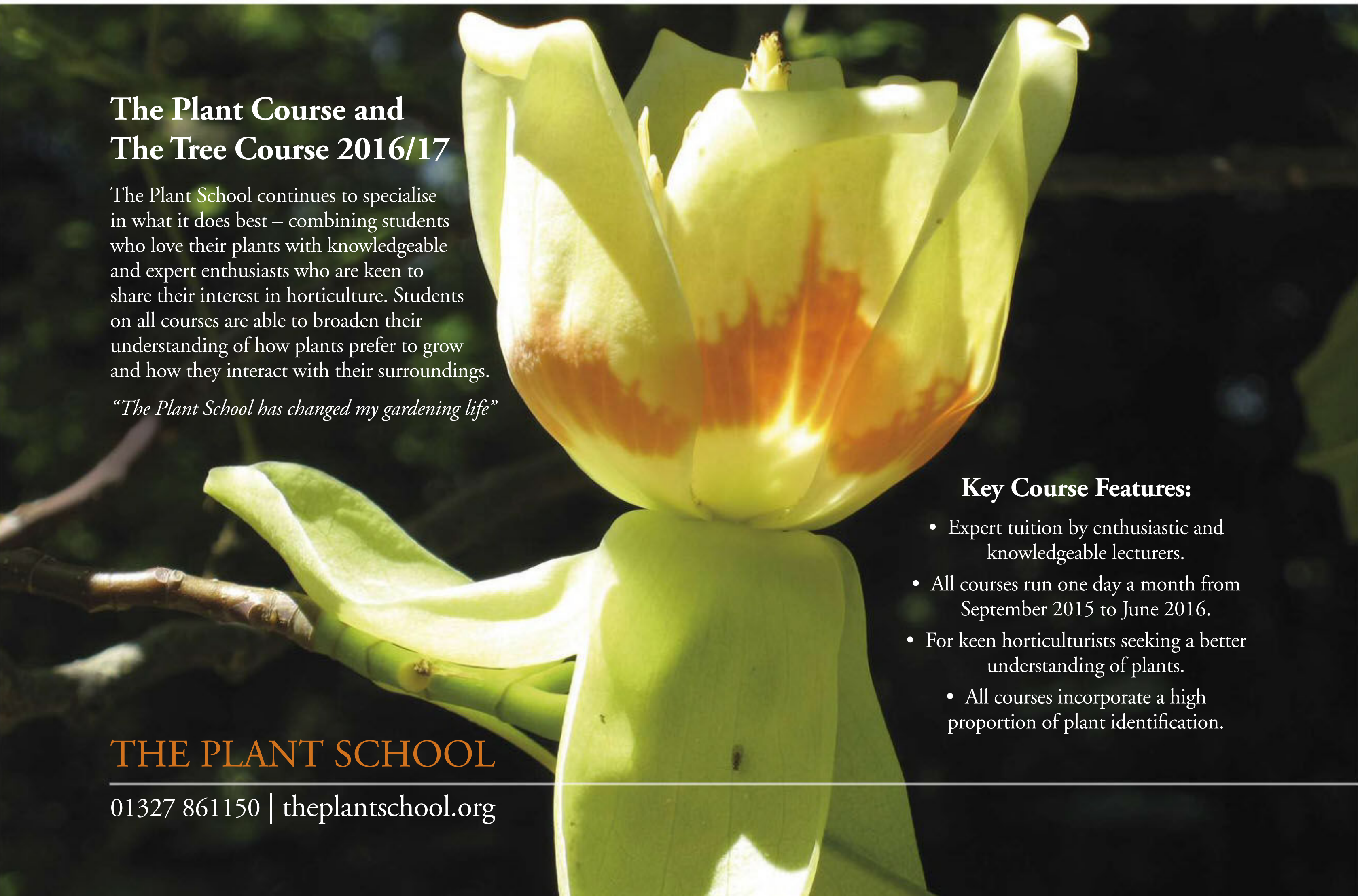

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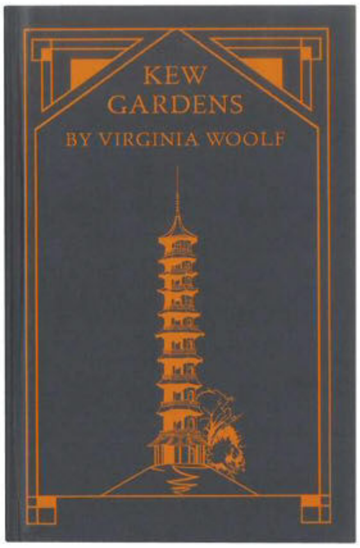
SHORT STORY

To the flowerbed

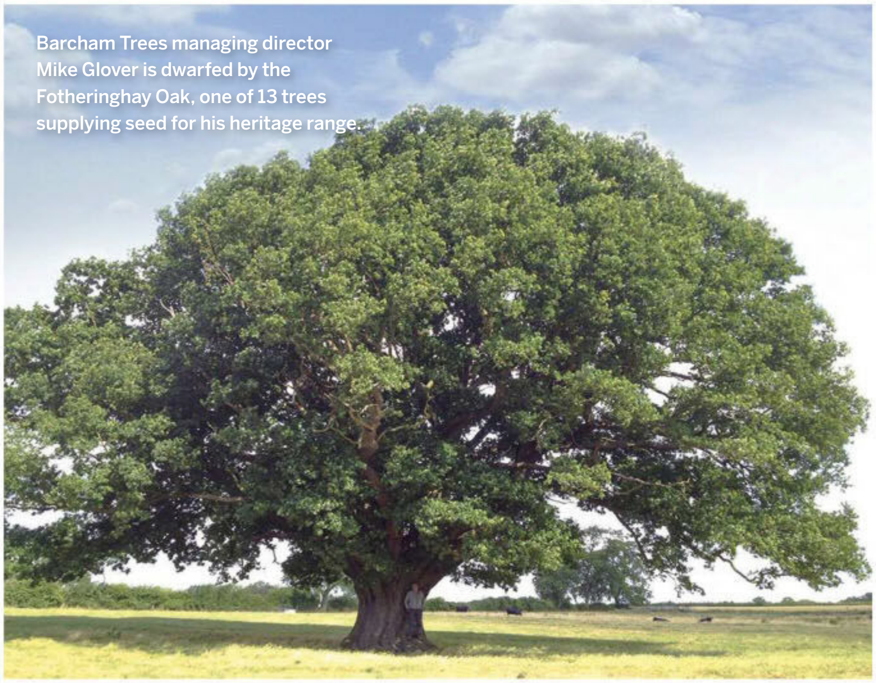
Kew Gardens, a short story by Virginia Woolf, is set to charm a new generation of readers in a beautifully illustrated book from Kew Publishing. First published in 1919, it describes a hot July day in the eponymous botanic gardens through the snatched conversations and thoughts of different characters. It costs £8 from **shop.kew.org**



NEW SEEDS

Alla moda

The new catalogue from Chiltern Seeds features around 300 new and reintroduced flower and vegetable seeds, including a mouth-watering treat for green-fingered gourmets in the form of Agretti 'Roscano' (£2.25). Also known as saltwort or *Salsola soda*, agretti has a flavour reminiscent of samphire and is something of a delicacy in Italy. Here in the UK, it's much prized by chefs, and caused a stir last year when it was featured on *MasterChef* resulting in UK seed stocks selling out. So get your order in quick. **chilternseeds.co.uk**



Barcham Trees managing director Mike Glover is dwarfed by the Fotheringhay Oak, one of 13 trees supplying seed for his heritage range.

ANNA QUAGLIA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

HERITAGE TREES

Rooted in history

Barcham Trees has introduced a range of 13 native British trees all grown from the seed of carefully selected specimen trees, such as the Fotheringhay Oak (above). This 700-year-old *Quercus robur* would have been a fairly mighty oak when Richard III was born at nearby Fotheringhay Castle in 1452, and it is still thriving today. Other trees in the range include the Holkham Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and the Cirencester Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Prices start at £39.98 for a small sapling. **barcham.co.uk**

HEADY MIX

Botanical forager and mixologist Lottie Muir has come up with four deliciously different scents – Bloody Rosemary, Chelsea Fringe Collins, Good Calmer and Woodland Martini – that playfully combine cocktail mixes with the quintessential British outdoors. The Cocktail Gardener candles, developed from herbs and flowers in Lottie's garden, cost £30 each from amazon.co.uk

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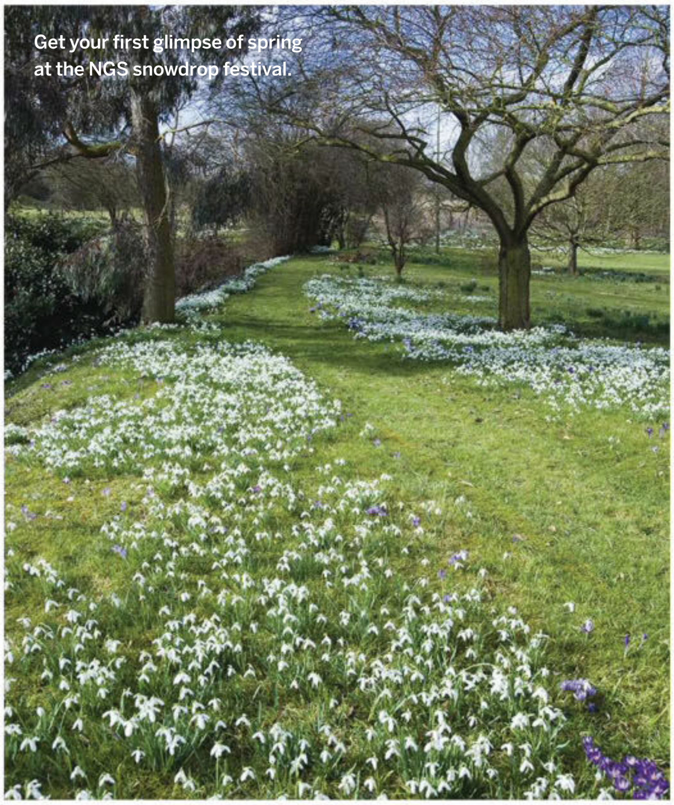
SNOWDROP FESTIVAL

Let there be white

Carpets of white snowdrops are always one of the highlights of February, offering a tantalising first glimpse of spring. Now the National Garden Scheme is hosting its first ever snowdrop festival, with more than 100 private gardens in England and Wales opening throughout February, to offer visitors the chance to see their stunning snowdrop collections. Dates and entrance fees vary, but all money raised goes towards causes supported by the NGS, which each year donates more than £2.6 million to nursing and caring charities, including Marie Curie and Carers Trust. The festival is supported by Visit England, which is marking the 300th anniversary of 'Capability' Brown's birth by naming 2016 its Year of the English Garden. Visit **ngs.org.uk** for details of garden opening times.



Get your first glimpse of spring at the NGS snowdrop festival.

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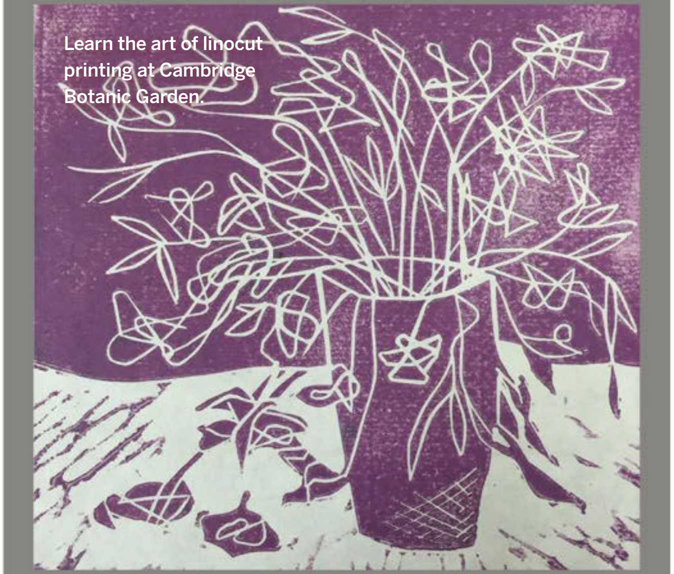
Diary



Learn the art of linocut printing at Cambridge Botanic Garden.

• **Chiswick House Camellia Show**
A chance to view beautiful displays of Chiswick House's camellias, believed to be the oldest in the western world, and an opportunity to buy your own heritage plants. 11 February – 13 March (closed Mondays), 10am-4pm, entry free. Chiswick House, London W4 2QN. Tel 020 8742 2905, chgt.org.uk

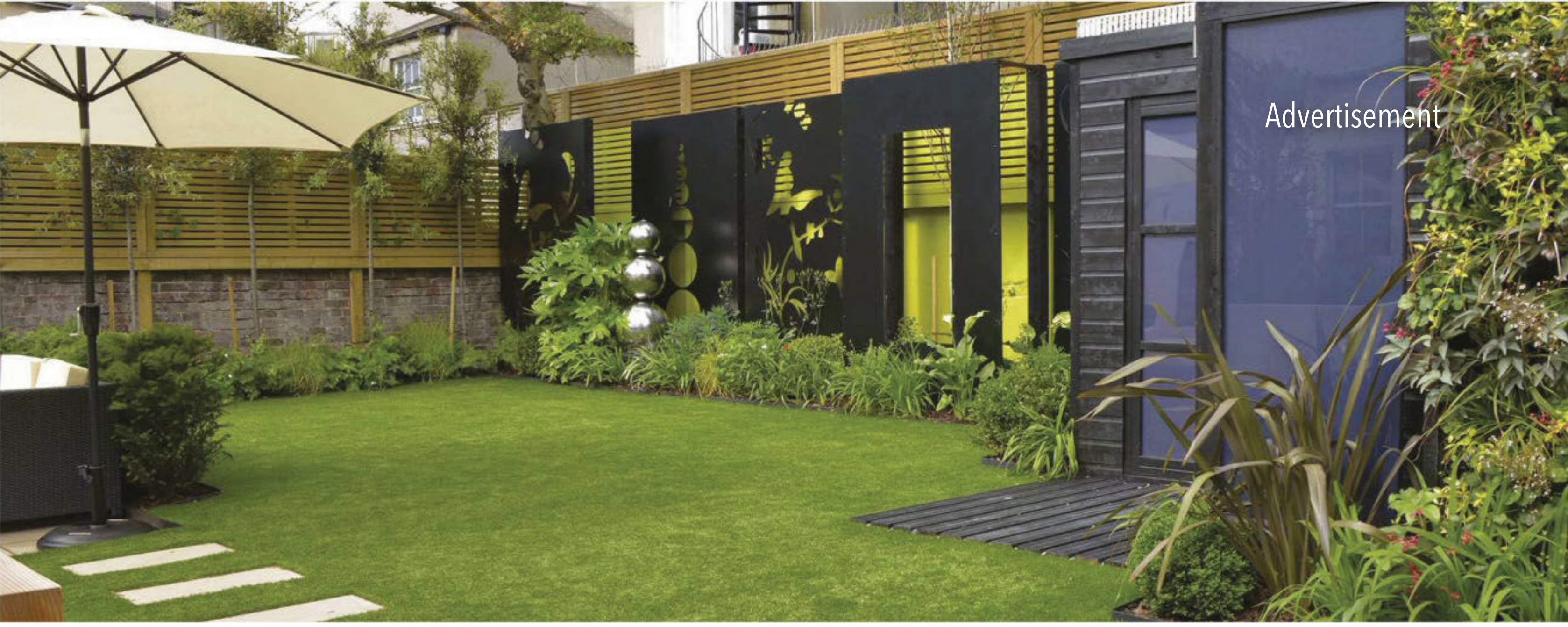
• **Perennial Plant Conference**
Winterdays, the 9th International Perennial Plant Conference organised by the International Hardy Plant Union, is a chance for growers to share their experiences of perennial plants, with lectures from expert speakers in English. 12-14 February. Bildungsstätte Gartenbau Grünberg, Giessener Strasse 47, 35305 Grünberg, Germany. Tel +49 228 8100251, isu-perennials.org

• **A Masterclass in Planting**
Increase your knowledge of plants with renowned gardener Jimi Blake. Twelve day-long sessions, held over the course of a year in Jimi's stunning garden, start on 21 February, 10am-4pm, €888. Hunting Brook Gardens, Lamb Hill Blessington, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. Tel +353 (0)87 285 6601, huntingbrook.com

• **Linocut Printing: Orchids**
Learn the basics of linocut printing while drawing inspiration from the orchid display in the Glasshouse of the University of Cambridge Botanic Garden. The two-day course will take you through the process of linocut printing from mark-making techniques to applying ink and using a press. 23 February, 10am-4pm, £120. University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 331875, botanic.cam.ac.uk

• **Snowdrop Walks at Rode Hall**
Enjoy the first signs of spring on a snowdrop walk around Rode Hall's Grade II-listed park and gardens. Until 6 March, 11am-4pm, £5. Rode Hall, Scholar Green, Cheshire ST7 3Q P. Tel 01270 873237, rodehall.co.uk

JULIETTE WADE / GETTY MAGES



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News, topical treats and more...

Three of the best! February can be a grim month, but don't despair – here are three of the best of our customer projects with some photos of glorious gardens to inspire you to think of 2016 garden projects and to help get you through the cold winter months.
louise@jacksons-fencing.co.uk

Below: You can almost feel the heat radiating off the gorgeous circular paving in Maureen Vinall's garden designed by Earthstone Landscapes. One of the aims of the redesign was to make what was essentially quite a small garden appear more spacious. This was achieved by terracing different levels within the garden using Jakwall to make flowerbeds that radiate outwards and step upwards from a central round paved area.

Above: Jacksons Venetian panels are used to dramatic effect in this stunning garden refurbishment by Brighton designer Dawn Banks - she says, "I always use Jacksons Fencing as it provides the high quality contemporary effect required within my designs. The added benefit of the 25 year guarantee is very important when creating a beautiful space for clients. It is important, not only to use the highest quality material, but it is essential that they stay looking good and last for many years to come. A garden is an investment that grows and matures over time, so it is unthinkable to introduce a product that will perish or rot. So by installing Jacksons I can be sure these integral parts of my design will stay looking great as the garden grows around it."

Below: The lovely garden below belongs to Brian Hattersley. He saw the Retreat shelter at a show Jacksons were attending and decided to incorporate it into the design for his new garden. He explained that he actually wanted something a bit larger than the standard Retreat shelter, so he's adapted it to make a 'one and a half' sized one, see below. I think you will agree, it looks great, especially with the matching Venetian fencing.

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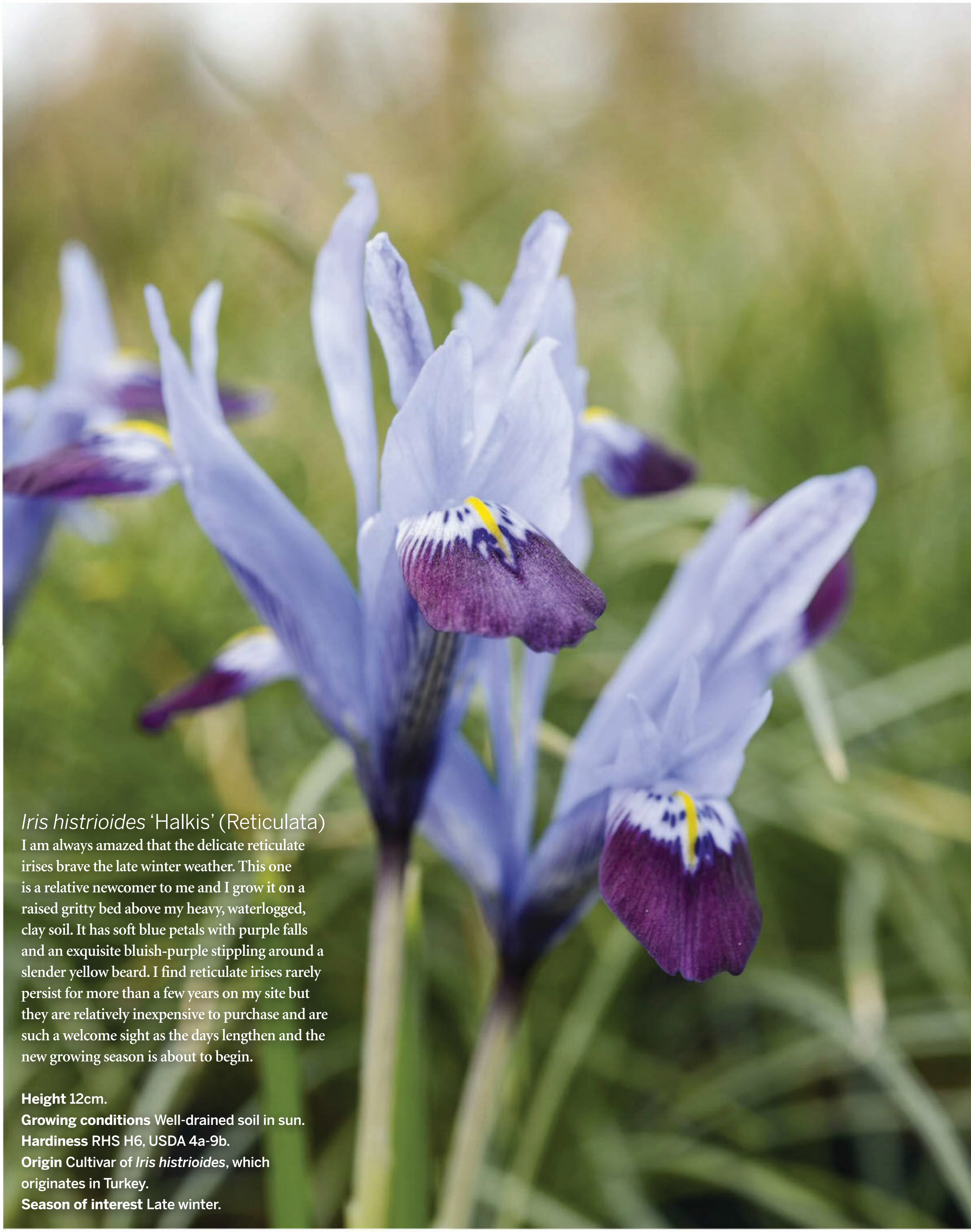


Iris histrioides 'Halkis' (Reticulata)

I am always amazed that the delicate reticulate irises brave the late winter weather. This one is a relative newcomer to me and I grow it on a raised gritty bed above my heavy, waterlogged, clay soil. It has soft blue petals with purple falls and an exquisite bluish-purple stippling around a slender yellow beard. I find reticulate irises rarely persist for more than a few years on my site but they are relatively inexpensive to purchase and are such a welcome sight as the days lengthen and the new growing season is about to begin.

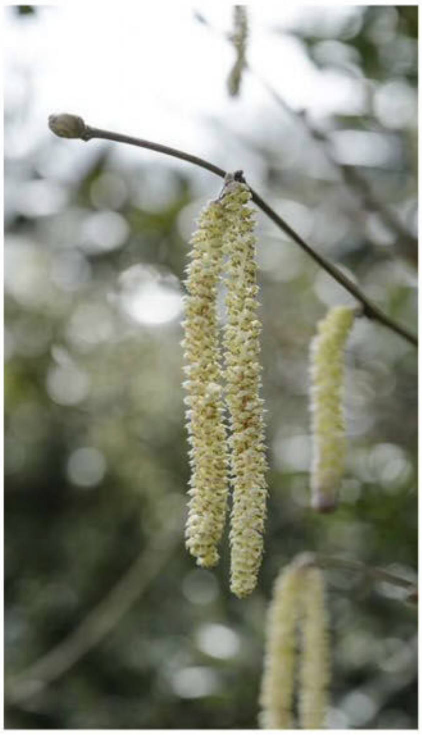
Height 12cm.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil in sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.
Origin Cultivar of *Iris histrioides*, which originates in Turkey.
Season of interest Late winter.

Marina Christopher is a plantswoman who owns Phoenix Perennial Plants in Hampshire*.

February plants

In the first of her new series, plantswoman and ecologist Marina Christopher suggests plants to brighten up the last days of winter

WORDS MARINA CHRISTOPHER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



Corylus avellana

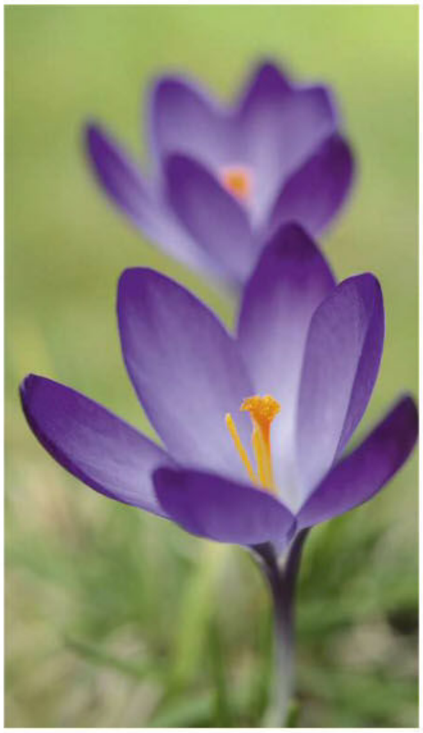
From leafless twigs, long, yellow, male hazel catkins emerge in late winter to remind me that the growing season has started. Closer inspection reveals tiny, red, female flowers adhering tight to the stem. The catkins are always my signal of the awakening of a new season and I look forward to their emergence. Hazel coppices with honeysuckle are favoured by dormice and hazel twigs are invaluable for supporting plants in herbaceous borders. In autumn I compete with squirrels to harvest young hazelnuts when the flesh is milky and sweet.

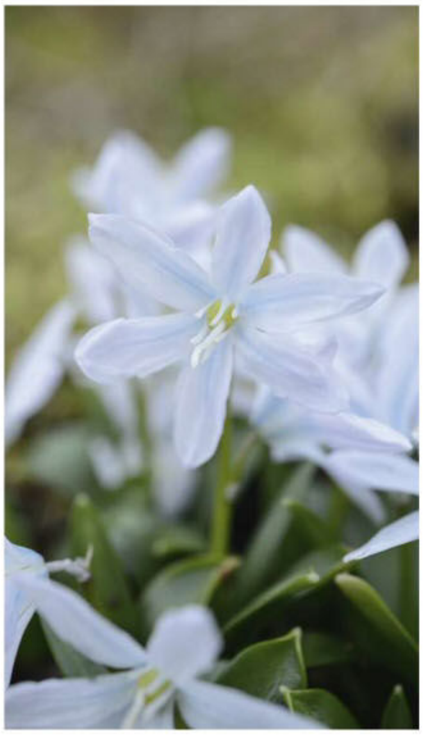
Height 6m.
Growing conditions Sun or semi-shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 4a-8b.
Origin Europe, western Asia and northern Africa.
Season of interest Autumn, winter.

Crocus 'Ruby Giant'

A sterile hybrid of *C. tommasinianus* but with wider petals in a deeper shade of purple. Flowering in late February it provides a valuable source of nectar for early bumblebees and on a mild winter's day its delicate fragrance will fill the air. Although it does not set seed, colonies form quite rapidly by division of the corms. They look equally good growing through short turf or beneath winter-flowering shrubs. If grey squirrels dig up corms, try placing fine chicken wire on top of your planted crocuses before you replace the grass.

Height 9cm.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil, sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness rating RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.
Origin Of hybrid origin.
Season of interest Late winter, early spring.





Scilla mischtschenkoana 'Tubergeniana'

This is one of the earliest *Scilla* species to flower, pushing its ice-blue flowers through the earth before any foliage. The flower stems elongate to hold the blooms aloft with a delicate fragrance that has the bumblebees flocking to find them; an important source of nectar at this time of the year. To enhance the beauty of the flowers there is a darker central blue line on the backs of the petals. Quiet, elegant and charming, it quickly forms small colonies. AGM†.

Height 10cm.
Growing conditions Moist soil, sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.
Origin Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Iran.
Season of interest Late winter.

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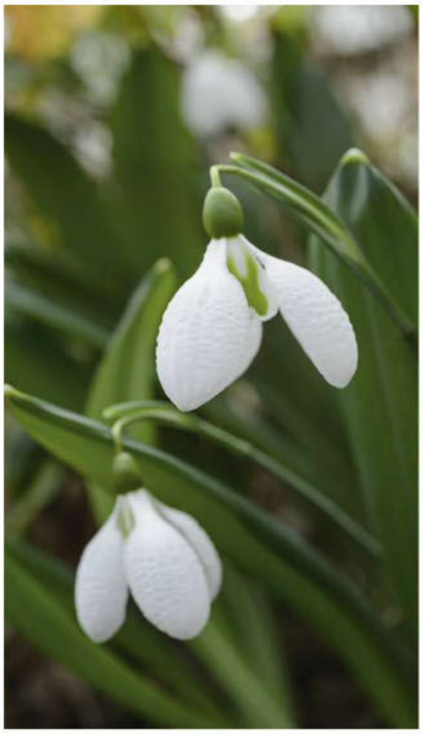
*Open by appointment only. Email marina@phoenixperennialplants.co.uk for details. †Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.



Galanthus plicatus 'Augustus'

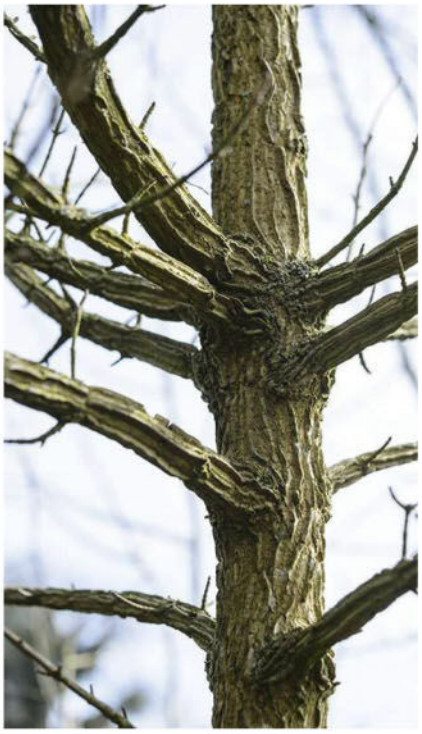
Portly and distinctly puckered flowers atop broad foliage are characteristic of this beautiful snowdrop found in the garden of Lewis Palmer at Headbourne Worthy near Winchester. It was named by Amy Doncaster for her friend Edward Augustus Bowles. There are so many wonderful snowdrops to choose from but this cultivar is particularly vigorous and healthy on my site. I grow it in a raised bed in a shade tunnel with wooden slats giving it half shade and some shelter from wind, allowing me to view it without getting on hands and knees.

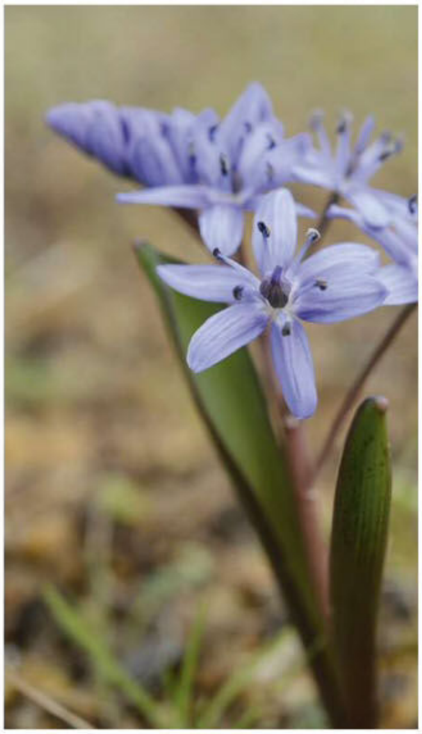
Height 15cm.
Growing conditions Semi-shade with plenty of leaf mould.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8.
Origin Cultivar of *G. plicatus*.
Season of interest Late winter, spring.

Acer campestre

The field maple is a familiar component of hedgerows and is the only maple native to Britain. It is a great subject for hedge laying, providing a stock-proof and attractive deciduous screen. More commonly associated with chalk and limestone soils, it can grow into a medium-sized tree. It seeds around my nursery and I love to see the deeply fissured corky bark during the winter months. Pale-pink young foliage emerges in May before maturing to greener hues through summer. In autumn, leaves turn a clear yellow, mirroring the stems of the grass *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea*. AGM.

Height Up to 25m.
Growing conditions Sun or semi-shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
Origin Europe, western Asia.
Season of interest Winter, spring, autumn.





Scilla bifolia

This charming little bulb hails from moist mountain meadows just below the snow line. Lilliputian maybe, with a pair of green leaves and a flowering stem with delicate sprays of blue flowers that open from base to tip and are a delight to behold. It has seeded, in full sun, in my gritty raised beds, which although sharply drained at the surface hold sufficient moisture a few centimetres below where the bulbs multiply to form small colonies. It will happily seed in short turf and in dappled shade under shrubs or among perennials. AGM.

Height 8cm.
Growing conditions Moist soil in sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 2a-8b.
Origin Turkey, central and southern Europe.
Season of interest Early spring.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

To see spectacular carpets of naturalised crocus and other early spring bulbs amid permanent sculptures visit the **University of Leicester Botanic Garden**. Its 16 acres of garden include an arboretum, woodland and herbaceous borders, a rock and a water garden alongside glasshouses exhibiting a wide range of temperate and tropical specimens. University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH. Tel 0116 2712933, www2.le.ac.uk/institution/botanic-garden

THE GARDEN HOUSE

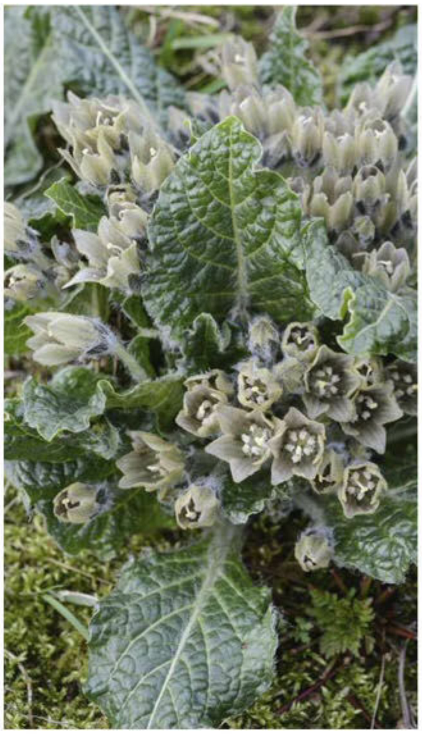
The Garden House.

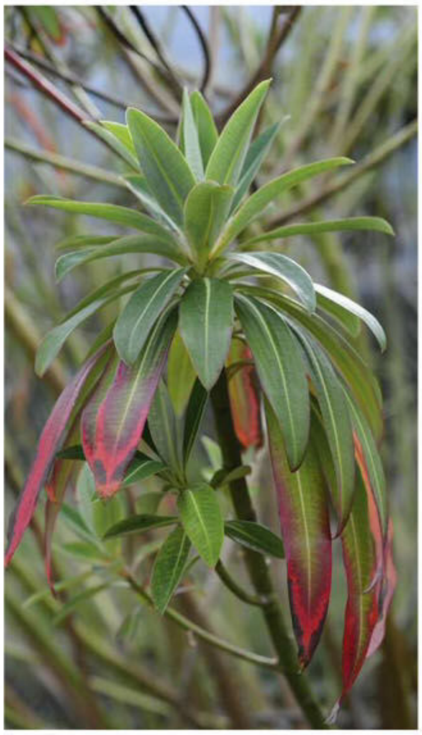
Join head gardener, Nick Haworth on his Winter Walks at **The Garden House**. These new walks take place on the last Thursday of each month and in February early spring bulbs and hellebores will be much in evidence with the added bonus of having the experience and knowledge of the head

Mandragora officinarum

A member of the potato family, this curious plant emerges in late winter as a cluster of yellowish-green flowers overlaid with dove-grey and darker guidelines leading into the centre of the inflorescence. The blooms appear just as the hairy foliage is emerging and within a few days the leaves have totally eclipsed the flowers. Most of the potato family is pollinated by bumblebees and this is probably the case with the mandrake. Fruits appear in summer, resembling a nest of spherical green eggs the size of a large, round plum.

Height 45cm.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil, dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.
Origin Southern Europe, western Asia.
Season of interest Late winter, summer.





Euphorbia x pasteurii

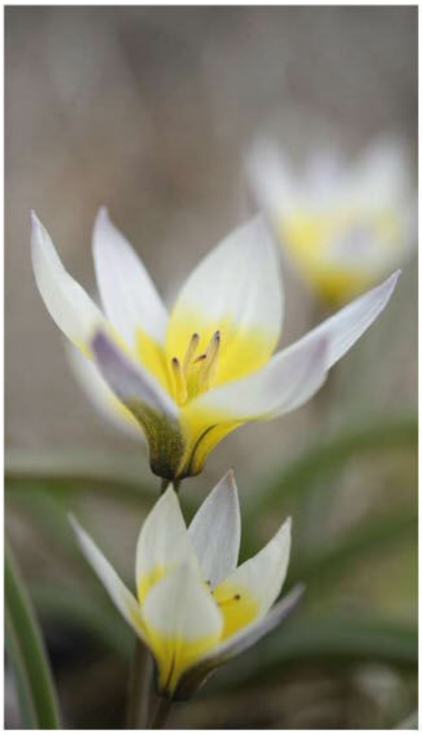
A handsome, fertile hybrid spurge – a natural cross between *E. stygiana* and *E. mellifera*, which isn't hardy on my cold site on clay. *E.* x *pasteurii*, however, has survived since I planted it ten years ago. Its thick, waxy leaves have a striking pale midvein and cold temperatures turn the older foliage glorious red and orange tints. Honey-scented flowers appear in late spring followed by globular seeds, which when ripe, explode to shed seeds some distance from the parent plant. AGM.

Height 3m.
Growing conditions Sheltered from wind, sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.
Origin Madeira (*E. mellifera*) and the Azores (*E. stygiana*).
Season of interest Year long.

Tulipa bifloriformis 'Starlight'

This diminutive tulip is perhaps not one of the showiest species but adds a quiet charm to the late winter border. It has six star-like petals, white on the inside with yellow towards the centre and purple suffused backs to the flowers with a greenish-purple base. A darker central purple line bisects the back of the petal and fuses with the dark stem. As with many early flowers it is pollinated by bees and has a subtle and sweet fragrance. Strap-shaped foliage is green with purple edges. Perennial, especially when planted deeply to 10cm or more. AGM.

Height 15cm.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil in sun.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Origin Selected cultivar.
Season of interest Late winter.



gardener to guide you through the garden. Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7LQ. Tel 01822 854769, thegardenhouse.org.uk

As daylight lengthens in February, many gardeners wake up to the fact that a new growing season is underway and it is always worth researching online for snowdrop and crocus walks. You'll find suggestions of gardens to visit with good displays of snowdrops on page 85. You can also find many winter gardens to visit locally in the **National Garden Scheme *Gardens To Visit*** (formerly *The Yellow Book*) or on the website ngs.org.uk

A well-laid hedge is a wonder to behold; not only is it a good habitat for all manner of beneficial wildlife but it also serves as a good livestock barrier, is an aesthetically pleasing natural screen and can help to rejuvenate an existing hedge. The field maple, *Acer campestre*, is a good subject for hedge laying and in winter its skeletal structure is revealed. A beautiful example can be seen at **Gilbert White's House and Garden**, The Wakes, Selborne, Alton, Hampshire GU34 3JH. Tel 01420 511275, gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk

Gilbert White's House and Garden.

CHRIS HOWES/WILD PLACES PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY

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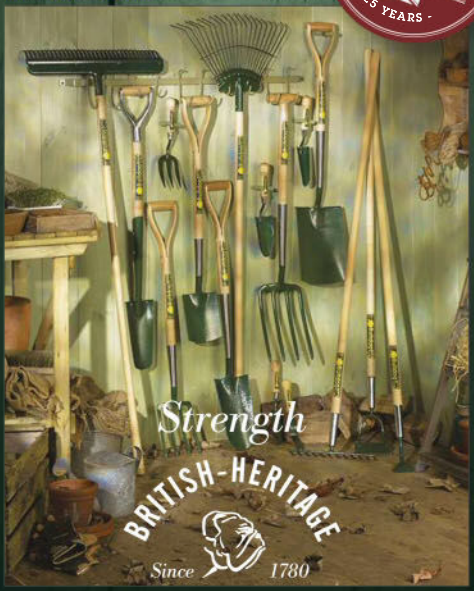

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IN THE
GARDEN

Herbs are essential for the gardener cook, but her herb was patch so overgrown last year that Jojo decides to transform it, using rocks

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** ILLUSTRATIONS **SARAH YOUNG**

Most gardeners maintain two gardens, one real and susceptible to slugs, and one imaginary in which every plant succeeds. The size of your plot is of no consequence; whatever its dimensions, you are prone to the paralysing malaise of the ideal. Whether you have a substantial acreage, a slither of town garden, a postage-stamp-sized yard or a few feet of balcony on which to put pots, beware too much fantasy gardening. A bit of dreaming is fine. After all, a gardener's imagination is what sustains them through the winter but at some point ambition must be turned into practical application.

Last year I worked hard to make my allotment more productive by concentrating on two large central beds, which were well manured and closely planted with annual vegetables. My yield increased but other parts of the garden suffered. The most glaring failure was the herb patch; low-growing thyme, marjoram and oregano were swamped by over-vigorous borage, lemon balm and bindweed. This year I will enclose my herb garden to make it more functional. I could make a raised herb bed or plant a square of box hedging but instead I am going to make a herb rock garden. One of my favourite food writers, Patience Gray, author of the cult cookbook and memoir *Honey from a Weed*, spent half a lifetime in Apulia in southern Italy, in a house that backed on to a stony hillside fragrant with herbs and littered with rough white stone, scrubby aromatic shrubs and ancient olive trees. The indigenous herbs and weeds of this landscape were central to her cooking.

I can't recreate Apulia in Leytonstone but I can raise my plants up and create the well-drained, less fertile conditions many herbs thrive in. Having consulted Reginald Farrer (1880-1920) in his comprehensive book, *The English Rock Garden*, I learn that the stones of the perfect rock garden should be laid so that there is a 'feeling of calm, of real inevitability and balance'. For Farrer, there is only one rock: limestone, a rock of such 'singular beauty of colour and outline' that to his mind even a child could fit block to block together like a jigsaw. He advises using fewer, larger rocks, buried deeply and firmly with their broadest side exposed for a flattened effect and with all rocks sloping backwards so that moisture runs back to the roots of the plants. In my rock garden I will grow dill, summer and winter savory, fennel and lovage, sage, oregano, marjoram, hyssop and thyme and, in a separate bed surrounding it, parsley, chervil, coriander, sorrel and tarragon. ▷

WHAT TO DO NOW

- Most of the things I get wrong at the allotment happily disappear back into the ground. Sadly, that's not quite the case when it comes to pruning. I wasn't really thinking ahead when I planted two half-standard plum trees (one greengage and one damson) a few months before the birth of our third daughter (now seven). The ensuing years saw me rather neglect their pruning. When I saw that the trees were towering over my neighbour's plot, I cut them back a little too ferociously. They responded by shooting out a multitude of thin whippy water shoots like witches fingers. They reproach me every time I pass. During a dry cold spell at the end of winter I am planning to thin them out. To shape them, I've taken some 17th-century advice. William Lawson's *New Orchard and Garden* book has a woodblock print describing 'the perfect Forme of fruit tree'. Another 17th-century gardener, John Evelyn, writes that the 'principal art of a gardener consists in pruning', which makes me feel even worse. Better is his graceful phrase describing the ideal shape of a small fruit tree: 'keep hollow like a bell'. I will hold that in my mind as I prune.

CHERVIL
IN THE KITCHEN
THYME
FENNEL
SORREL
BAY

A herb garden should be more than aromatic window dressing. It should be a key part of your everyday cooking. But how can you know which herbs you will find most useful before you have planted them? Here are some of my favourite uses for common herbs, so tear this out, stick it on the fridge and wait for summer:

Sorrel I use thin snippets of sorrel fresh in dahls, omelettes, tarts and scattered over pizza before serving but you can also make a delicate sauce with cream that can be served with poached eggs. Gently melt 20g of butter with 125g of sorrel leaves. Gradually add ¼ cup (125ml) of cream, thinned with a little stock or water. This sauce is also good with fish.

Tarragon Make an aromatic white wine vinegar by stuffing a bottle of good wine vinegar with a few branches of true French tarragon (more aromatic than the Russian kind) and leaving in the bottle until it is used up. Fresh, it goes well with chicken or fish, in vinaigrette, and in Béarnaise sauce.

Chervil, chives, tarragon and parsley Chop these fresh herbs very finely in equal quantity to make the classic French culinary mixture *fines herbes*. The opportunity to eat omelette *fines herbes* is reason enough for planting a herb garden. Scatter a tablespoon over an omelette just before you turn it.

Parsley Gremolata is an Italian condiment traditionally made with lemon zest and parsley and eaten with braised meats. My version uses the zest of half an orange, a garlic clove, peeled and then minced, four tablespoons of parsley, two sage leaves and a tablespoon of roasted hazelnuts, and salt and black pepper, all chopped very fine and combined.

Watercress Although more commonly thought of as a salad leaf, the peppery watercress is also a useful herb. Available year-round, it can be used to make herb butter or in place of mustard to flavour sauces or to garnish meats.

Fennel If you grow fennel or can collect it in the wild, spend a summer day collecting pollen with a small, artist's brush. When stored in a jam jar, fennel makes a highly aromatic dust for roast pork. If that seems too fiddly, use sun-dried stalks to flavour stocks and fish soups.

Rosemary A strong herb, rosemary should be used sparingly. I like to add a little freshly chopped to tinned tomato sauces but you can also use a twig of rosemary dipped in olive oil to baste roast meats either on the barbecue or in the oven.

Bay leaf As well as using a bay leaf tied into a bundle with thyme and parsley stalks to make bouquet garni, I add one (plus a little milk) to the water I boil my potatoes in for mash. □

USEFUL COOKERY TECHNIQUE

No.2 *Chiffonade*

Green salad herbs, such as sorrel or basil, can be rolled up into a thin cigar shape and then sliced into thin ribbons before being added to bowls of mixed leaves or to garnish soups.

RECIPES

***Zhug* (Yemeni hot sauce)**

This fiery Yemeni relish is as addictive as it is hot. I first came across it in a shop in Los Angeles called Cookbook, a combined greengrocers and deli that had so many of my favourite things on offer that I almost felt as though I had managed to conjure it up myself. One thing I hadn't heard of was *zhug* but I bought it on faith. You can swirl it into light broths and bean soups, mix it with yoghurt and dip your bread in it, or use it as a relish for meat or fish. You can use dried red chillies (deseeded and soaked for half an hour and then scraped of their pulp) instead of green chillies to make a red version or add chopped tomatoes and fenugreek seeds to turn it into a very similar Yemeni relish called *hilbeh*.

1tsp caraway seeds, **1tsp cumin seeds**, **seeds from 8 cardamom pods**, **1tsp black peppercorns**, **4 slim green chillies deseeded and chopped**, **1tsp salt**, **6-8 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped**, **a bunch of parsley**, **1 bunch of coriander**, **juice of 1 lemon**. **Makes about 275ml.**

In a spice grinder or pestle, mill the cumin, caraway, cardamom and black pepper until fine. Cut the stalks off the herbs and blend in a food processor with the other ingredients, scraping down the sides until you have a fine purée. Add the spices and combine. Keeps for a week or two in the fridge.

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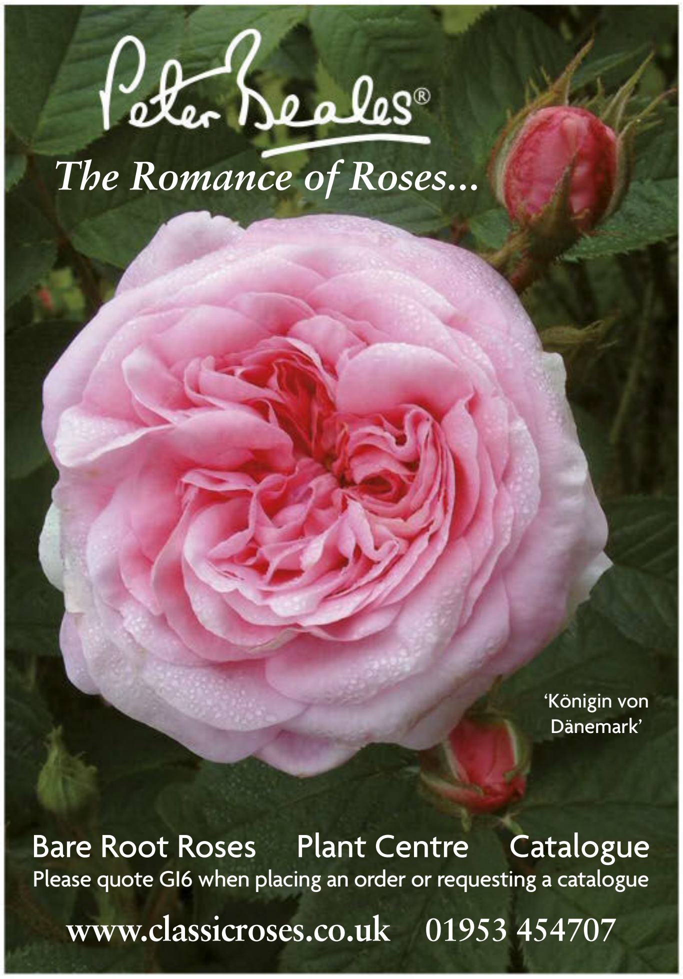

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Saturday 12th March, 11am – 1.30pm

A CELEBRATION OF THE SWEET PEA
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EASTER WREATH MAKING
Saturday 19th March, 11am – 1.30pm

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Wednesday 23rd March, 11am – 4.30pm

APRIL

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Friday 15th April, 11am – 12.30pm

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Friday 22nd April, 11am – 1pm

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Edward Flint

Edward's gardening experience is steeped in the Arts and Crafts tradition, starting at Great Dixter and progressing to head gardener at a private estate in Sussex

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory As a child I remember working extremely hard to cultivate giant radishes. Big they certainly were, their edibility was, however, questionable.

First plant love Native trees: for climbing, burning, whittling and building with – I had a more or less feral, rural childhood.

Who has inspired your career Without a serendipitous meeting with Christopher Lloyd and a cheeky request for a summer job at Great Dixter, I would probably not have gone into gardening as a profession. He taught me to love gardening with plants as a form of self-expression.

Favourite landscape and garden Derek Jarman's garden at Prospect Cottage, Dungeness, is perhaps the ultimate garden where house, garden and landscape seamlessly meld. Plus the Hubbard's garden at Chilcombe, which has similarly strong ties into the wider landscape.

Worthwhile tips for every gardener He who hesitates is lost… If you see something that needs doing it is probably too late. Do what you want in your own garden: beware the slavish tangles and thorns of gardening fashion. Your eyes are your most important tools. Use them, be critical, STOP, LOOK, THINK. Listen to what your garden and plants are telling you and remember: non-intervention if consciously considered can be a positive intervention.

Most valuable training We undervalue the importance of time to develop ideas in gardens. It has taken me 15 years in one place to appreciate the importance of time. Evolution not revolution.

Least favourite plant group Any planting where thoughtless gardening has rendered the shrubs meaningless, amorphous, pointless, insensate, characterless blobs really does upset me.

Favourite gardening books A good library is important to me; Christo's writings are frequently thumbed; Graham Stuart Thomas has inspired and opened my eyes to many plants. I love the writings of Anna Pavord; scholarly, practical and educational without worthy stuffiness. I frequently find myself looking through Beth Chatto's books, a lifetime of experience of really growing plants clearly distilled.

Contact edwardflint@sussexstills.com. Edward is running The Art and Craft of Gardening – an advanced level, year-long course at Great Dixter, starting in March, which aims to extend plant knowledge and enhance technical abilities. **greatdixter.co.uk**

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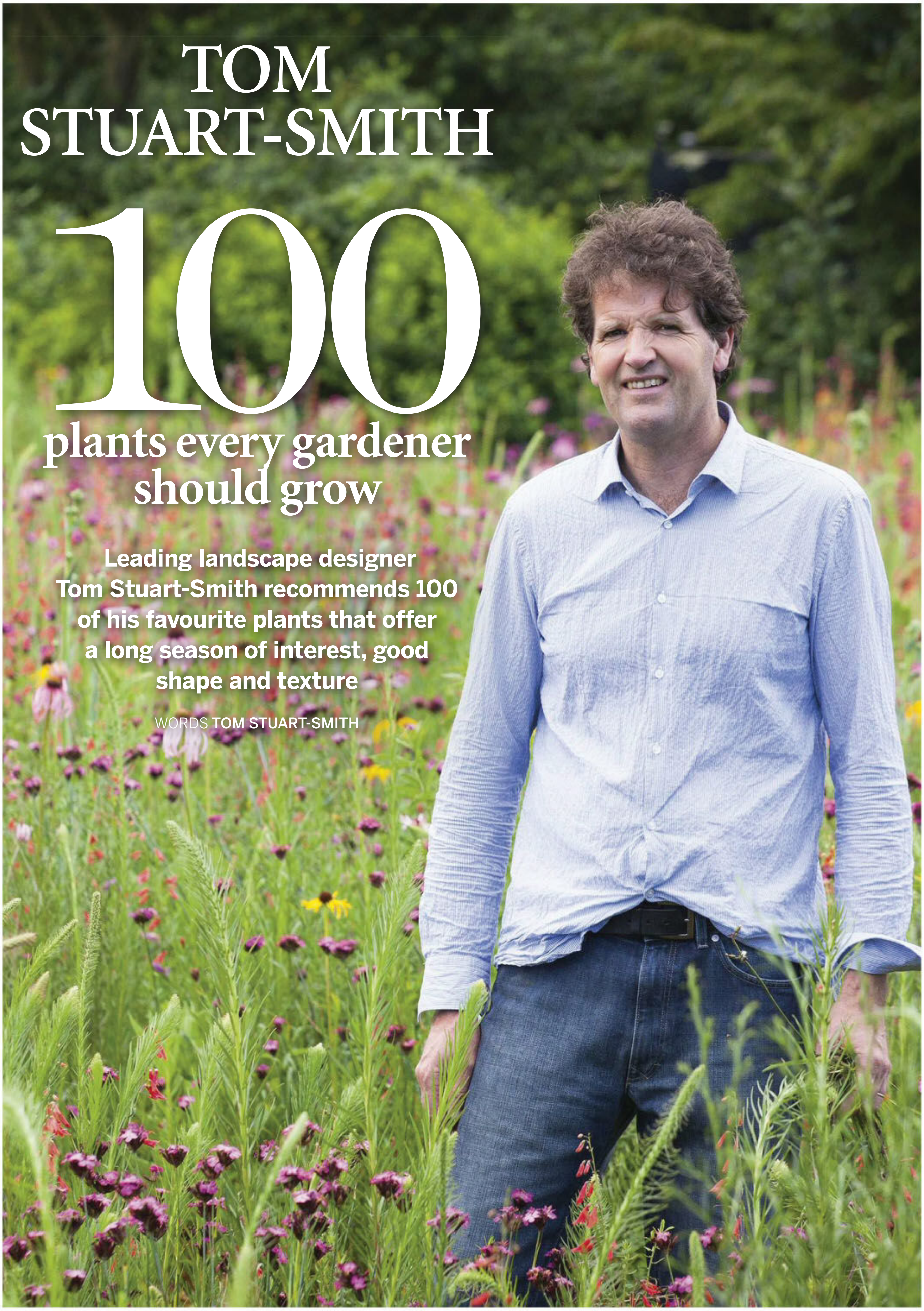

TOM STUART-SMITH

100 plants every gardener should grow

Leading landscape designer Tom Stuart-Smith recommends 100 of his favourite plants that offer a long season of interest, good shape and texture

WORDS **TOM STUART-SMITH**

JONATHAN BUCKLEY

1 *AMSONIA HUBRICHTII* PERENNIAL
The flowers are an inky blue and very attractive but I grow this more for the foliage, which is fine and feathery and colours up a warm gold in autumn. **Height (H)** 1m. **Spread (S)** 1.2m. **Growing conditions (C)** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/light shade. **Season of interest (SI)** Summer. **Hardiness ratings (HR)** USDA 5a-8b.

2 *AMSONIA ORIENTALIS* PERENNIAL
Most amsonias are from the USA. This is from Turkey and a rather lowly and delicate looking thing, but it's actually an immensely tough and useful filler. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/light shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-8b.

3 *ANEMONE NEMOROSA* 'ROBINSONIANA' RHIZOME
One of the supreme joys of spring. The flowers of palest blue with a touch of mauve held above the most deliciously delicate foliage. There are many excellent forms of our native wood anemone, but this one is hard to beat. AGM*. **H** 15cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

4 *ANEMONE* X *HYBRIDA* 'KÖNIGIN CHARLOTTE' PERENNIAL
My favourite Japanese anemone. Flowers are semi-double and a generous pink. Leaves are semi-evergreen and a bit glossy. Is less invasive than many other of the pinks. AGM. **H** 1.5m. **H** 60cm. **C** Moist, fertile soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Autumn. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

5 *ARBUTUS UNEDO* TREE
The epitome of beauty and strength, combining the sinewy, deep cinnamon-coloured trunk with poise and delicacy of the flower and the improbable strawberry-like fruit from the previous year, which covers it in autumn. Fast growing. AGM. **H** 10m. **S** 10m. **C** Acid-to-neutral soil; full sun. **SI** Autumn. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

6 *ASARUM EUROPAEUM* PERENNIAL
A European woodland ginger relative. The flowers are curious, brown and cryptic but the leaf is so round, perfect and shiny it's as though they have been individually polished. A very smart foil for snowdrops or little ferns. **H** 8cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist, well-drained and moderately fertile soil; partial/full shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** USDA 4a-7b.

7 *ASTRANTIA MAJOR* 'RUBY WEDDING' PERENNIAL
A fine, dark-red astrantia. Leaves have a dark crimson flush in spring and if well fed and watered, flowering will be almost continuous from June to the end of October. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 4a-7b.

8 *BLECHNUM PENNA-MARINA* FERN
A delightful, miniature, evergreen fern from New Zealand. It suckers around in moist shady soil to create a beautifully textured carpet, particularly good if grown through *Asarum europaeum*. AGM. **H** 10cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist, acidic soil; deep or part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.

9 *BUPLEURUM FRUTICOSUM* SHRUB
A solid, reliable shrub with slightly waxy-looking leaves and flowers that have the same ornamental quality as fennel. A handsome shrub for Mediterranean planting schemes. **H** 2m. **S** 2.5m. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun/shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-11.

10 *CAMELLIA* X *WILLIAMSII* 'BOW BELLS' SHRUB
So many larger-flowered camellias look terrible after a frost. *Williamsii* hybrids tend to be more graceful than japonicas and this cultivar's flowers are smaller than most, single and of a strong pink that contrasts boldly with the golden stamens. **H** 4.5m. **S** 4m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 7a-9b.

11 *CENOLOPHIUM DENUDATUM* PERENNIAL
A slightly unruly but delicately charming umbellifer. Its fresh green, dissected leaves are pleasing in early spring followed by flat plates

2

3

4

5

6

2 FIONA MCLEOD / GAP PHOTOS, 3 VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS, 4 FIONA MCLEOD / GAP PHOTOS,
5 LOOK DIE BILDAGENTUR DER FOTOGRAFEN GMBH / ALAMY, 6 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS

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*HOLDS AN RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

of white flowers in July. Seeds about liberally so not for the tidy gardener. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/light shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 6a.

12 *CLEMATIS* 'FRANCES RIVIS' CLIMBER
Wonderfully long petals of a soft, rich blue, darker and redder at the base of each petal. Never so vigorous as to make a mess of the rose or other shrub it is growing through. **H** 2.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 4b-9a.

13 *CORNUS KOUSA* VAR. *CHINENSIS* TREE
There are so many wonderful forms of this tree it seems ungenerous not to give the credit to the parent. It is a thing of great beauty in flower – or rather bract – because, rather pedantically that's what they are. AGM. **H** 5m. **S** 5m. **C** Deep, good soils. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

14 *CORYLOPSIS SINENSIS* SHRUB
I first met this at Knightshayes Court in Devon where it thrived in moist woodland soil. Like a small hazel, although unrelated, and more delicate and showy in flower. AGM. **H** 5m. **S** 5m. **C** Moist, neutral to acid soil; semi shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 6a-8b.

15 *COTINUS* 'FLAME' SHRUB
An excellent hybrid of the smoke bush with larger leaves than its *coggygria* parent but smaller than the beautiful *C. obovatus*. AGM. **H** 6m. **S** 5m. **C** Full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

> *Pale and dark pink forms of* Cyclamen coum *mixed up with snowdrops is one of the great spring planting combinations*

16 *CRAMBE MARITIMA* PERENNIAL
Fabulous flaps of grey for foliage and an eruptive cloud of headily scented white flowers in June. The dried flower heads make for extraordinary little sculptures. **H** 50cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

17 *CYCLAMEN COUM* TUBER
The pale and dark pink forms of this cyclamen mixed up with snowdrops is one of the great early spring planting combinations. AGM. **H** 5cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Any well-drained soil; semi-shade to shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

18 *CYCLAMEN HEDERIFOLIUM* TUBER
My mother planted a little circle of cyclamen around a young beech tree 25 years ago. It looked completely potty and I'm ashamed to say I told her so. Now they have seeded into the grass and the puddle has become a drift and will one day become a sea. That's what I call real gardening. AGM. **H** 13cm. **S** 12cm. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil; partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

19 *DAPHNE BHOLUA* 'ALBA' SHRUB
More thoroughly evergreen than most forms of this wonderful species, with very dark, shiny leaves. The flowers are relatively small, but are well scented and of a glistening pure white. Difficult to propagate, so hard to find and pricey. **H** 2-4m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil; sun or partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 8a-9b.

20 *DARMERA PELTATA* PERENNIAL
Perhaps the finest plant for securing stream sides liable to erosion, but it is also simply one of the most satisfying foliage plants for damp soils. The leaves, like glossy, puckered parasols, form impenetrable stands and then take on lovely warm colours in autumn. AGM. **H** 1.2m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist, boggy soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-7b.

21 *DIANTHUS CARTHUSIANORUM*
PERENNIAL
In my prairie this really gets the season going, when thousands of bright-cerise flowers combine with *Penstemon barbatus* to light up an old paddock. Ideal for lean, dry, alkaline soils. **H** 60cm. **S** 20cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-10b.

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10 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY, 12 THE GARDEN COLLECTION/FP/ANDREW LAWSON, 13 MBP-PLANTS / ALAMY, 15 MARIANNE MAJERUS, 21 JASON INGRAM

▷ **22 *DICKSONIA ANTARCTICA*** FERN
I include this tree fern on condition that the stems are not straight, but bent into pleasingly wonky shapes. You can plant these on 15cm of soil as long as they are in a shady place with regular water. AGM. **H** 6m. **S** 4m. **C** Partial to full shade. **SI** Needs winter protection. **HR** RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.

23 *DISPORUM LONGISTYLUM* 'GREEN GIANT' PERENNIAL
Surprisingly, this elegant woodlander is entirely evergreen in a mild winter. The pale-yellow flowers, which hang down in the manner of a solomon's seal in midsummer, are to be admired from close quarters. **H** 1.8m. **S** 1.2m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 7a-9b.

24 *DOELLINGERIA UMBELLATA* PERENNIAL
This strong, dull-white aster begins flowering in July and the seedheads still look good in November. A plant for wilder, bigger spaces where its expansive habits, both suckering and seeding, won't be a problem. **H** 1.6m. **S** 90cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Autumn. **HR** USDA 3a-8b.

25 *ECHINACEA PALLIDA* 'HULA DANCER' PERENNIAL
Like its parent, this white form of the lovely echinacea, looks fashionably exhausted by life, but if you are as lovely as this, you are easily forgiven. Seedheads are magnificent when seen in quantity, bobbing above a haze of grass. **H** 1.2m. **S** 60cm. **C** Deep, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

> *This lovely echinacea, looks fashionably exhausted by life, but if you are as lovely as this, you are easily forgiven*

26 *ELAEAGNUS* 'QUICKSILVER' SHRUB
A tidy shrub with shimmering silver leaves and scented flowers. *E. angustifolia* is perhaps more beautiful but can become sprawling. Both have vicious spines. AGM. **H** 4m. **S** 4m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

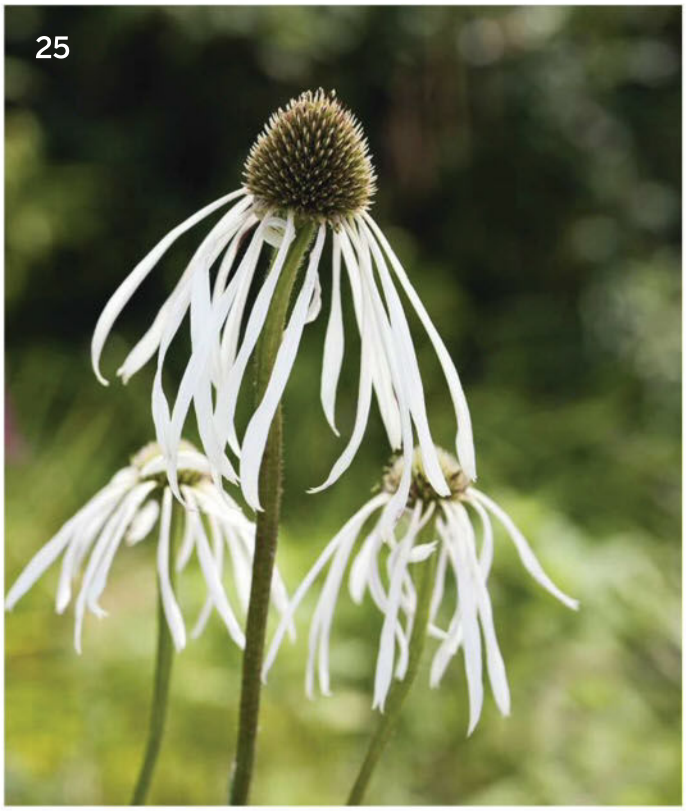
27 *EREMURUS* 'JOANNA' PERENNIAL
Magnificent, but needs a decent auditorium to do its bit, partly because the leaves create a slightly messy aftermath that is best lost in a deep plant bed. Needs heat and light. **H** 3m. **S** 1m. **C** Fertile, moist and well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 6a-9b.

28 *ERIGERON KARVINSKIANUS* PERENNIAL
This freely seeding daisy is a total charmer, guaranteed to loosen up any planting scheme that's looking a bit dull and serious. Especially effective growing through paving or out of old walls. AGM. **H** 20cm. **S** 30m. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.

29 *ERYNGIUM YUCCIFOLIUM* PERENNIAL
A key constituent of my prairie where its grey-green leaves and grey-white bobbly flowers are the sculptural highlight of midsummer. **H** 1.2m. **S** 60cm. **C** Fertile, moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

30 *ERYTHRONIUM CALIFORNICUM* 'WHITE BEAUTY' PERENNIAL
A charming woodlander with white hanging flowers in spring that die back in summer. AGM. **H** 35cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; light/dappled shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

31 *EUPATORIUM MACULATUM* (ATROPURPUREUM GROUP) 'RIESENSCHIRM' PERENNIAL
Sometimes the smallest details make the difference between a good plant and a truly spectacular one. There are several good forms of this beast but this is the best, with heads a wonderful soft red – the colour of Venetian robes in a Tintoretto painting. AGM. **H** 2.2m. **S** 1m. **C** Moist soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-10b. ▷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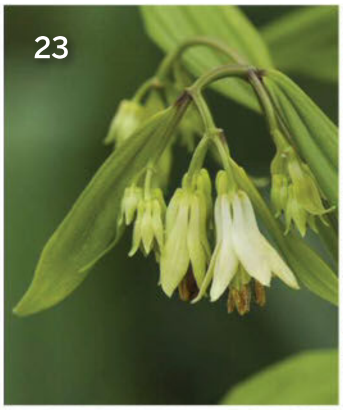
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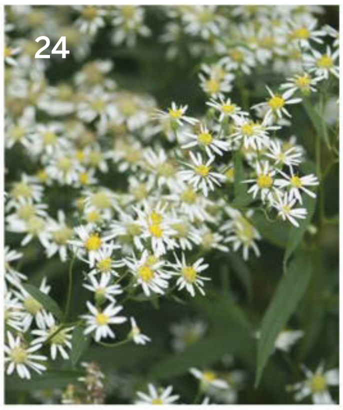
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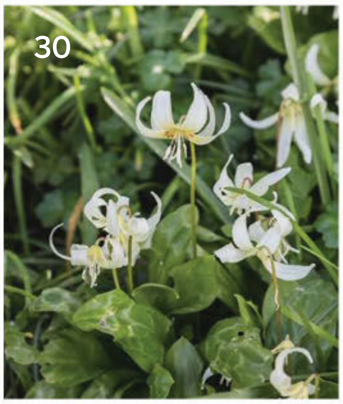
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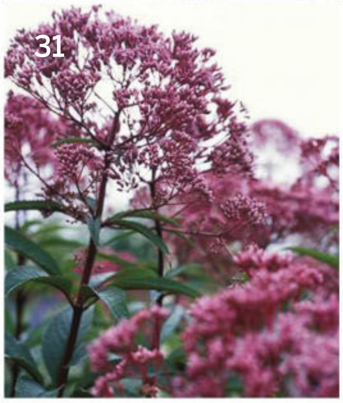
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23 MARIANNE MAJERUS, 24 JACQUI DRACUP / GAP PHOTOS, 25 CHRISTINA BOLLEN / GAP PHOTOS, 30 GRAHAM PRENTICE / ALAMY, 31 SARAH CUTTLE / GAP PHOTOS

JASON NGRAM

▷ 32 *EUPHORBIA CORNIGERA* PERENNIAL

A species that almost seems to make the garden glow with light when in flower. The leaves are of such a vivid green and the flowers so saturated a yellow-green, you sometimes think your eyes are playing tricks. AGM. **H** 1cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Moist, humus-rich soil; light, dappled shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

33 *EUPHORBIA NICAEENSIS* PERENNIAL

An excellent evergreen. The drier the happier. **H** 40cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained, light soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-8b.

34 *EUPHORBIA SEGUIERIANA* PERENNIAL

An invaluable spurge. Unlike the rampant *E. cyparissias* this little plant has a single rootstock and golden flowers from midsummer, and it never spreads. The drier the better. **H** 40cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Well-drained, light soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 6b-11.

35 *EUPHORBIA* X *PASTEURII* PERENNIAL

A hugely impressive evergreen with tropical-looking, honey-scented flowers in spring. Not fully hardy but seedlings do pop up. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 9a-10b.

36 *FAGUS SYLVATICA* TREE

A versatile deciduous trees good for hedging and topiary, especially in winter when its russet leaves add both depth and warmth to a garden. And one of the best trees to climb. AGM. **H** 30m. **S** 15m. **C** All soils; sun/shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

37 *FICUS CARICA* 'BROWN TURKEY' SHRUB

The word sycophant, from the Greek *sukon*, literally means to 'show the fig'. Although this may derive from an obscene hand gesture, a more intriguing origin is that the Greek trade in figs was once so valuable it was controlled by statute and a sycophant was someone who grassed on an unlicensed trader. If you don't have space in the ground, grow in a pot and underplant with *Erigeron karavinskianus* and thyme. AGM. **H** 4m. **S** 5m. **C** Poor soil; dry and hot. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 7a-11.

38 *GALANTHUS NIVALIS* BULB

I know there are many excellent cultivars but I'm very happy with this. I began at home 25 years ago with a bucketful from my mother's garden and now there are tens of thousands thanks to regular dividing. AGM. **H** 10cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; partial shade. **SI** Winter. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

39 *GERANIUM* 'NIMBUS' PERENNIAL

An excellent free-flowering geranium with fine dissected leaves and flowers of a good mid purple with quite a bit of blue in them. I use it with *Hakonechloa macra* where the purple gives a bit of edge. AGM. **H** 50cm. **S** 50cm. **C** Moderately fertile, moist, but well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

40 *HAKONECHLOA MACRA* GRASS

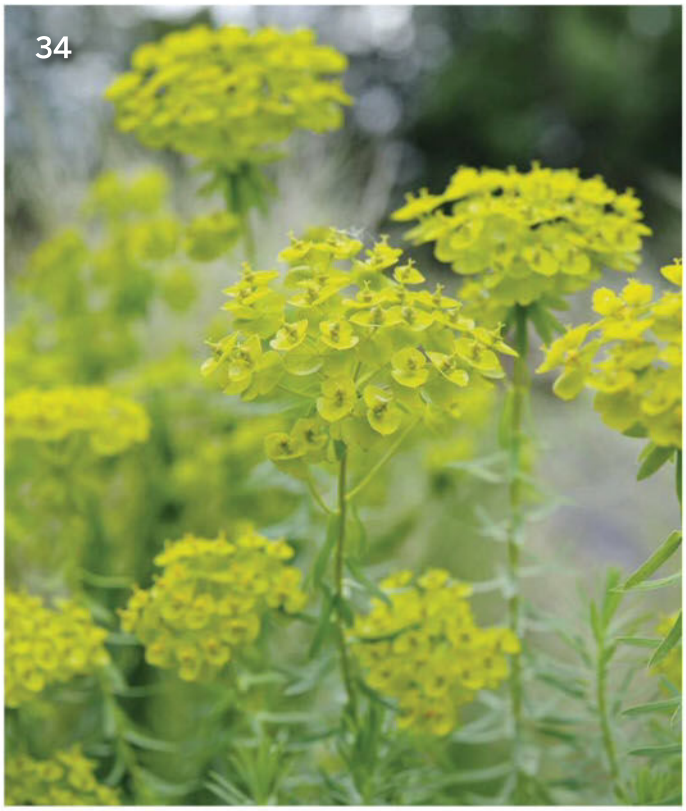
I use this fresh green grass more than any other. It makes the most wonderful wavy carpet among trees and instantly calms down a planting scheme. It even looks great after a good deal of battering. I could go on, but unfortunately this grass sometimes does not. AGM. **H** 35cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Fertile, moist but well-drained soil; full sun/part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

41 *HELLEBORUS* X *HYBRIDUS* 'YELLOW LADY' PERENNIAL

Not yellow but a lovely soft, appley green. I mix these in with the reds and whites in loose groups interplanted with pulmonarias, omphalodes and epimediums. As more hellebores fall victim to virus, it's important to catch them early, dig them up and burn them. **H** 45cm. **S** 45cm. **C** Neutral-alkaline soil; dappled shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

42 *HYDRANGEA ASPERA* 'MACROPHYLLA' SHRUB

There are many handsome forms of *Hydrangea aspera*. I first grew this one with *Thalictrum delavayi* and *Clematis* 'Étoile Violette'. A very serendipitous combo. The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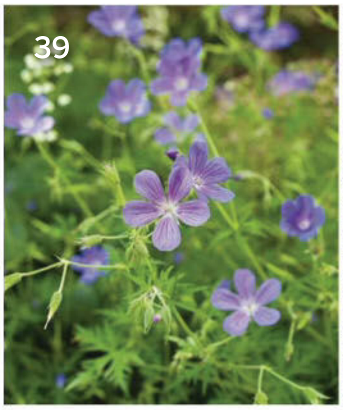
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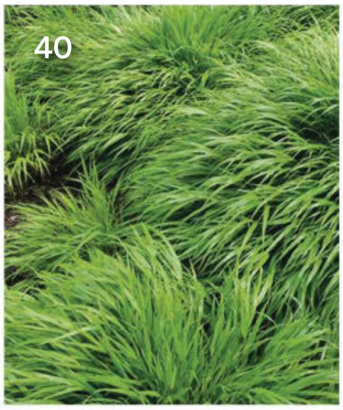
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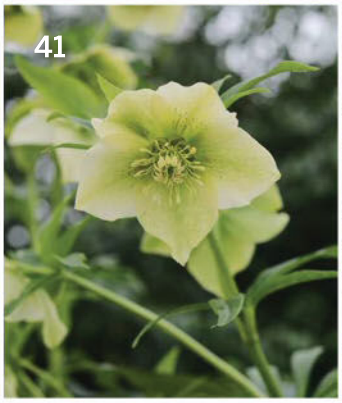
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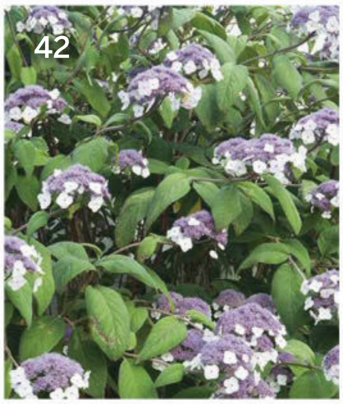
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34 & 41 JASON NGRAM. 39 CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS. 40 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY. 42 MANUELA GOEHNER / GAP PHOTOS

soft, hairy leaves and the wide, lacy flower heads can stop you in your tracks in August. AGM. **H** 3m. **S** 3m. **C** Moderately fertile, moist but well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

43 *HYDRANGEA QUERCIFOLIA* SHRUB
While most hydrangeas are fairly dull when not in flower, this one has superb leaves and is more tolerant of heat and sun, provided there is some moisture. The panicle of white flowers can be spectacular in some forms, and the autumn colour is a rich, dark red. Such a useful, handsome plant. **H** 2m. **S** 2.5m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 6a-9b.

44 *IRIS* 'BENTON DAPHNE' PERENNIAL
I thought David Howard and Sarah Cook's display of Cedric Morris irises was the highlight of last year's Chelsea Flower Show. So refined and delicate, they make many of the irises we more commonly grow look very brash. **H** 90cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 3a-9b.

45 *IRIS* 'SILVER EDGE' PERENNIAL
A fine, robust iris with a broad and handsome flower in mid blue and the thinnest edge of white that just adds a touch of sophistication. I like to plant it in really big drifts as the plants look lonely in small groups. AGM. **H** 1.2m. **S** 90cm. **C** Moderately fertile, moist but well-drained soil; full sun or dappled shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

> *David Howard and Sarah Cook's display of Cedric Morris irises was the highlight of last year's Chelsea Flower Show*

46 *KOLKWITZIA AMABILIS* 'PINK CLOUD' SHRUB
I often think that the most beautiful sight every year in the Chelsea Flower Show site is a mature *Kolkwitzia* growing through a pear tree and yet how often do you ever see this wonderful shrub in a show garden? Graceful, floriferous and quietly elegant. AGM. **H** 3m. **S** 4m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

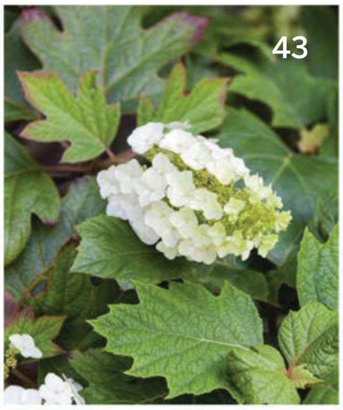
47 *LAURUS NOBILIS* F. *ANGUSTIFOLIA* TREE/SHRUB
A very handsome form of bay. I remember there used to be a plant at Kew Gardens that must have been 15m high. It looked like something from a drawing by the Rococo artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard; tufty, lustrous, vigorously ascending. Far more distinguished looking than the ordinary bay. AGM. **H** 15m. **S** 4m. **C** Well-drained soil; sun/part shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 7a-11.

48 *LIATRIS PYCNOSTACHYA* PERENNIAL
One of the tallest blazing stars. A plant I have only ever used in prairie seeding and planting, intermingled with other plants. It has a very bold, upright line and is a wonderful shade of purplish pink in August. **H** 1.5m. **S** 45cm. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 3a-9b.

49 *LILIUM* 'BLACK BEAUTY' BULB
Magnificent *L. speciosum* hybrid of astounding vigour. Flowers from August to September. Exotic, stylish and easy. **H** 1.5-2m. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/semi shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 4a-10a.

50 *LONICERA PERICLYMENUM* 'GRAHAM THOMAS' CLIMBER
This is a selection of our native honeysuckle with flowers of dense yellowy cream and a sublime scent that is luscious in midsummer. AGM. **H** 8m. **S** 7m. **C** Fertile, moist, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-10b.

51 *LYTHRUM SALICARIA* 'SWIRL' PERENNIAL
Not especially interesting out of flower but this loosestrife has a much-branched spike of pale pink, which is both forceful and delicate. Lovely with *Doellingeria umbellata* and tall grasses. **H** 1.2m. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b. ▷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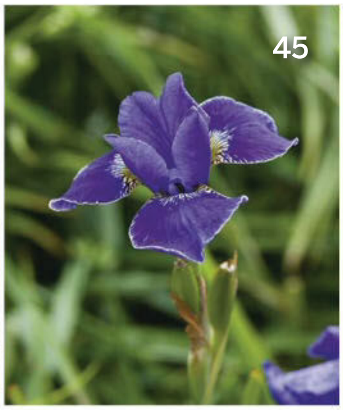
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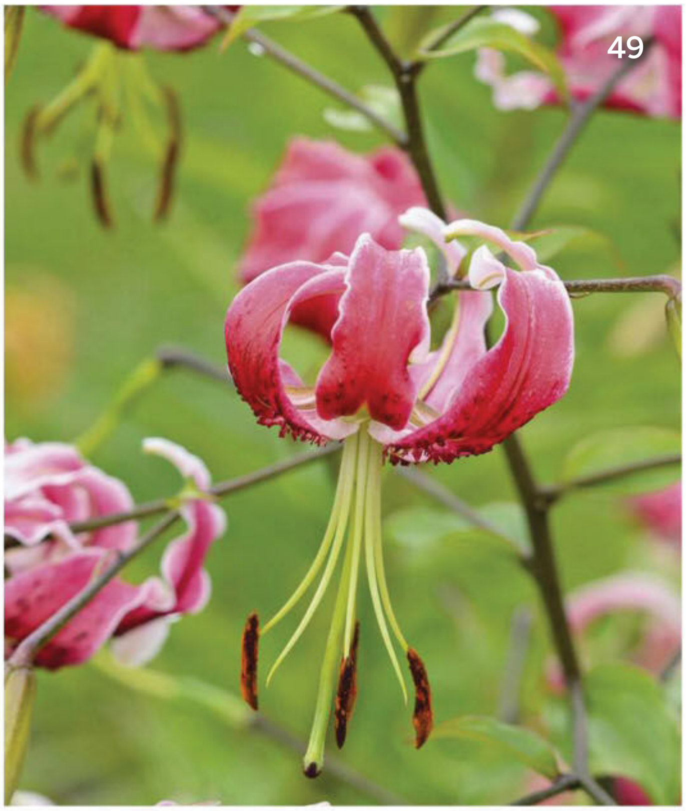
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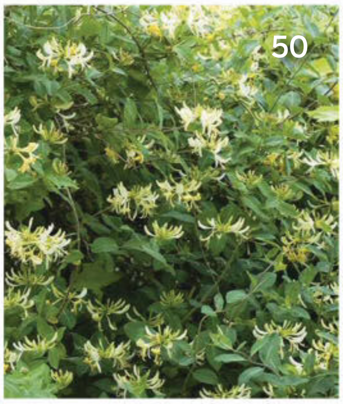
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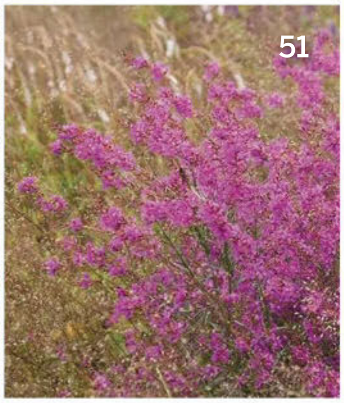
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43 & 50 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS. 45 ANDREA JONES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES. 49 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY. 51 REX MAY / ALAMY

▷ **52 *MAGNOLIA* 'DAVID CLULOW'** TREE

Magnolias mix the primitive and sophisticated with ravishingly beautiful results unequalled among hardy trees. This is one of the finest, with pure bowls of white emerging from long, felted buds. AGM. **H** 8m. **S** 8m. **C** Deep neutral-to-acid soil. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

53 *MALUS TRANSITORIA* TREE

Some crab apples have a slightly stiff look, but this is a tree of wild grace with the wind in its hair. Flowers are pale pink in bud opening white and in astounding abundance. Pea-sized yellow fruit and brilliant autumn leaf. AGM. **H** 8m. **S** 10m. **C** Well-drained soil. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

54 *MISCANTHUS SINENSIS* 'MALEPARTUS' GRASS

With so many miscanthus to choose from some might consider it a cop out to go for one of the oldest. But it combines good flowering with excellent russet autumn colour and is such an all-round performer it's often my first choice. **H** 2m. **S** 1.2m. **C** Moderately fertile, moist but well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

55 *MOLINIA CAERULEA* SUBSP. *ARUNDINACEA* 'FONTÄNE' GRASS

Tall and very graceful with flower heads that appear almost congealed. Unlike some cultivars, the stems bend under their weight, giving the whole plant a wonderful arching grace. I generally plant in a tight clump to give the appearance of a single large plant and then repeat intermittently. **H** 1.2m. **S** 80cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

> *I saw this familiar pheasant's eye last spring growing in drifts in the Apennines and my heart missed a beat*

56 *MORUS NIGRA* TREE

A mulberry I planted in 1987 now looks quite venerable. Keep away from white shirts and paving as its fruits stain memorably. AGM. **H** 10m. **S** 9m. **C** Well-drained soil. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-11.

57 *NARCISSUS* 'TOTO' BULB

White petals and creamy-white trumpet. An enchanting and relatively new *N. cyclamineus* hybrid. Flowers March – April. AGM. **H** 30cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-11.

58 *NARCISSUS POETICUS* VAR. *RECURVUS* BULB

Native to rough pastures in Europe, I saw this familiar pheasant's eye last spring growing in drifts in the Apennines and my heart missed a beat – and another when I bent to smell the sweet perfume. Smallish, white, hanging flowers with a yellow cup fringed with a thin line of bright red. Very tough and increases gradually even in rough grass. AGM. **H** 50cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

59 *NERINE BOWDENII* 'PALLIDA' BULB

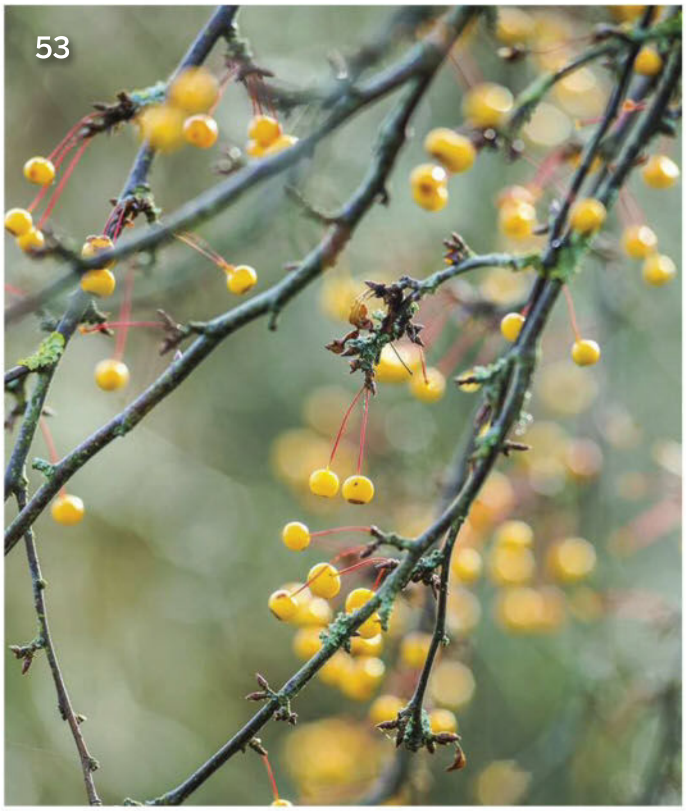
A flower of scintillating purity and poise. I love the hardier pink ones too but this is really special. **H** 45cm. **S** 25cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Autumn. **HR** USDA 7a-10b.

60 *OMPHALODES CAPPADOCICA* 'LILAC MIST' PERENNIAL

The straight species is an excellent, semi-evergreen ground cover with startling blue flowers. The flowers of 'Lilac Mist' are a softer lilac colour, easier to associate with hellebores, cyclamen and the more subtle epimediums. **H** 20cm. **S** 40cm. **C** Moderately fertile, moist soil; partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 6a-9b.

61 *ONOCLEA SENSIBILIS* FERN

A lush, green fern with pale leaves that are boldly indented. A coloniser of damp soils and if sufficiently moist it will be quite happy in sun. AGM. **H** 80cm. **S** 1m. **C** Moist, fertile soil; light/dappled shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.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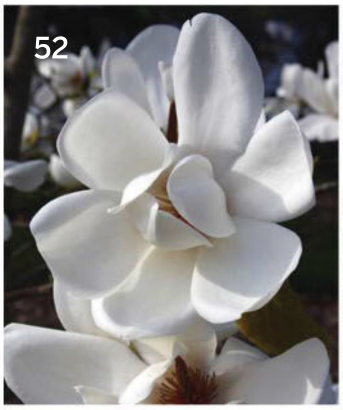
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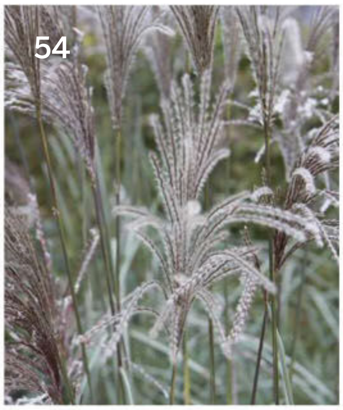
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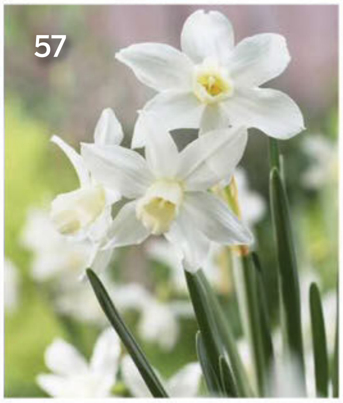
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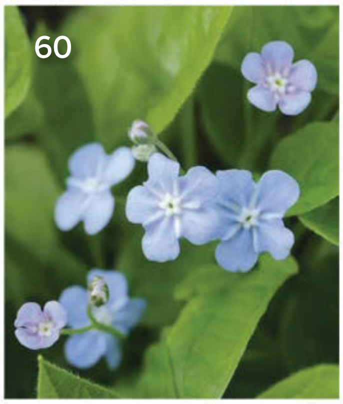
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52 FP/MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / THE GARDEN COLLECTION, 53 JASON INGRAM, 54 MATT ANKER / GAP PHOTOS, 57 VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS, 60 HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS

62 *PAEONIA LACTIFLORA* 'JAN VAN LEEUWEN' PERENNIAL
A particularly fine single peony of glistening white with a central boss of golden stamens. It has a robust constitution and fresh foliage and looks well in wilder parts of the garden. **H** 60cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Deep, fertile and moist, but well-drained, soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 6.

63 *PAEONIA ROCKII* PERENNIAL
The apotheosis of glamour and luxuriance. In its best forms the vast, silky flowers have a generous purple blotch at the base of the petal, but forms where the petals are stained pink are possibly even more beautiful. Best in semi shade. **H** 2.2m. **S** 2.2m. **C** Deep, fertile, moist and well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

64 *PAEONIA TENUIFOLIA* PERENNIAL
A plant I don't grow at home but have admired ever since I first saw it at Kew 30 years ago. Wonderful scarlet-red flowers with a boss of golden anthers. **H** 60cm. **S** 60cm. **C** Deep, fertile, moist and well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 4a-8b.

65 *PANICUM VIRGATUM* 'SHENANDOAH' GRASS
The tips of its leaves colour a deep burgundy from midsummer onwards, becoming gradually more intense to the point where it seems each blade is dipped in blood. Less vigorous than most panicums so makes a better bedfellow. **H** 1m. **S** 75cm. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

66 *PEROVSKIA* 'BLUE SPIRE' SHRUB
One of the most indestructible of hardy plants. It almost always lends a touch of wispy, soft-blue elegance to the scene. Its grey-white stems are a great asset in winter. AGM. **H** 1.2m. **S** 1m. **C** Well-drained, poor to moderately fertile soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-10b.

67 *PHILADELPHUS PURPURASCENS* SHRUB
Although not especially handsome for most of the year, in July this is exquisitely graceful with racemes of hanging, pure-white, heavily scented flowers, held within maroon calyces. **H** 4m. **S** 4m. **C** Well-drained, fertile soil; sun/part shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 6a-11.

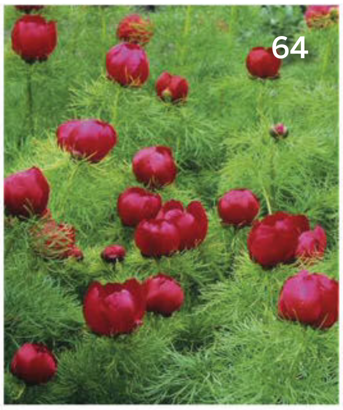
68 *PHILLYREA ANGUSTIFOLIA* F. *ROSMARINIFOLIA* SHRUB
The species is a variable shrub, many forms are rather rampant in growth or not reliably evergreen in the UK. This form has finer leaves and a soft billowing feel to it, which makes it very strokeable. **H** 3m. **S** 3m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 7a-9b.

69 *PHILLYREA LATIFOLIA* TREE
A mature *Phillyrea* gives unequalled weight to a garden, but takes time. One I planted nearly 30 years ago is 3m high and wide. Almost black in leaf with a solid but billowing crown. **H** 8m. **S** 8. **C** All soils; sun to semi shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 7b-9a.

70 *PHLOMIS GRANDIFLORA* 'LLOYD'S SILVER' SHRUB
A very robust and grey-leaved Jerusalem sage with sculptural and intriguing yellow flowers. Best in sharply drained soils. AGM. **H** 1.2m. **S** 1.2m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7b-11.

71 *PHLOX* X *ARENDSII* 'UTOPIA' PERENNIAL
A strong-growing phlox with flowers of a delicate and soft pink. It increases gradually and is thoroughly long lived and reliable. AGM. **H** 1.5m. **S** 30cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

72 *POLYSTICHUM SETIFERUM* 'PULCHERRIMUM BEVIS' FERN
A lush, strong, evergreen and finely dissected fern. Tolerant of alkaline soil as long as there is some moisture and shade. Very handsome indeed. AGM. **H** 1.2m. **S** 90cm. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; deep or partial shade. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 5a-9a. ▷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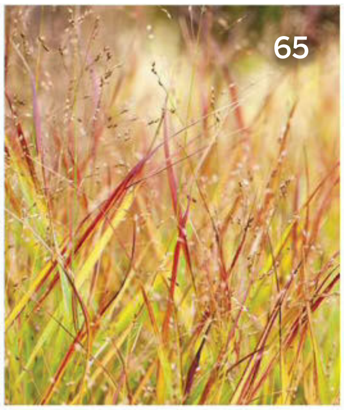
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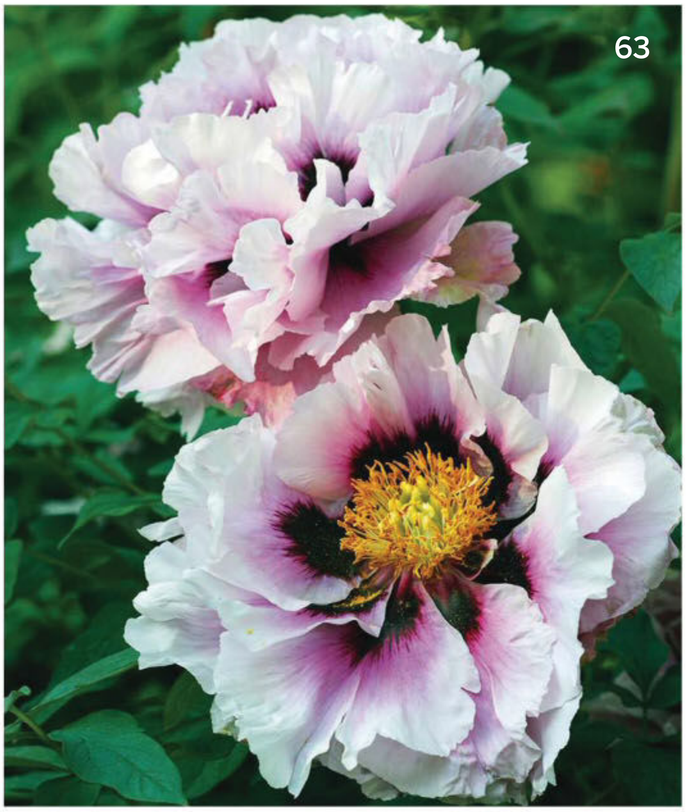
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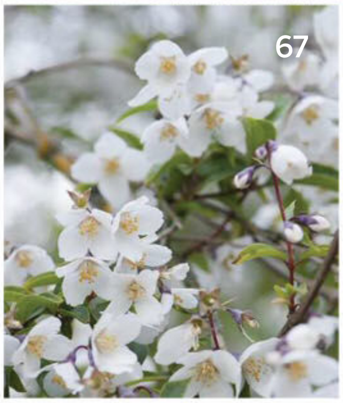
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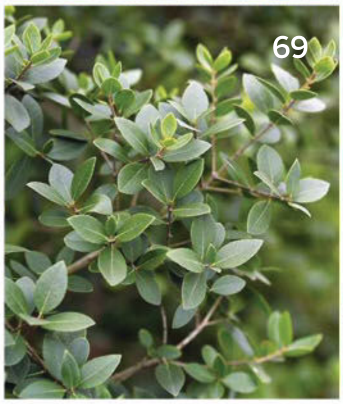
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63 MAGEBROKER / ALAMY, 64 J S S RA / GAP PHOTOS, 65 ANNE GILBERT / ALAMY, 67 & 69 ANDREA JONES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES.

▷ **73 *PULMONARIA* 'BLUE ENSIGN'** PERENNIAL
One of the best spring-flowering, low perennials for moist shade. Deep-blue flowers of startling intensity, but easy to mix with other flowers. Clean, unspotted leaves. Gets mildew if not happy. AGM. **H** 30cm. **S** 30cm. **C** Moist soil; semi-shade to shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

74 *QUERCUS ROBUR* TREE
I have occasionally regretted planting other trees but never an oak. My trees at home are now 9m tall and it gives me an intense pleasure to climb into them and look down on the garden. **H** 30m. **S** 25m. **C** Neutral-to-acid soil; sun. **SI** Year round. **HR** USDA 5a-8b.

75 *QUERCUS* X *HISPANICA* 'LUCOMBEANA' TREE
This looks like a large and spreading native oak with corky bark, but holds on to its leaves right through an average English winter. Important to plant a grafted plant. Fast growing and awe inspiring. AGM. **H** 25m. **S** 20m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil. **SI** Year round. **HR** USDA 7.

76 *RHODODENDRON DECORUM* SHRUB
Evergreen shrub with deliciously scented white blossom in June. AGM. **H** 6m. **S** 2.5m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; dappled shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

Rosa 'Seagull' is not so vigorous you end up having to move out of the house but is strong enough to take over a decent-sized tree

77 *RODGERSIA PODOPHYLLA* PERENNIAL
One of the most handsome foliage plants that you can grow in a moist, temperate garden. The broad, dissected foliage is suffused with red colouring and flowers are gently arching creamy-white plumes. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.8m. **C** Moist soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 6a-9b.

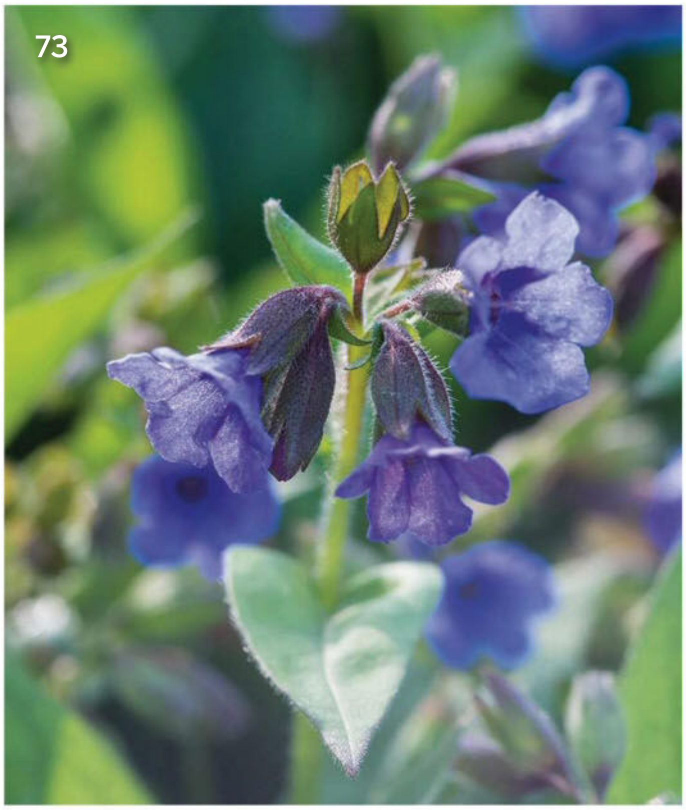
78 *ROSA* 'CHARLES DE MILLS' ROSE
If I were to grow just one of the highly bred roses, this would be it. Flowers are a plummish purple with shades of violet and a strong scent. An arching but compact habit and disease free. Only one flowering in midsummer, but, oh, what a flowering. AGM. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

79 *ROSA* 'FRANCIS E LESTER' ROSE
A rambler that is strong enough to get to the top of a two-storey house, but one that is never really overpowering. The flower is as close to a dog rose as you will find among ramblers. In autumn it is festooned with little orange hips. AGM. **H** 4m. **S** 4m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 6a-10b.

80 *ROSA* 'SEAGULL' ROSE
A favourite rambler; not so vigorous that you end up having to move out of the house but strong enough to take over a decent-sized tree. One glorious flowering in June of semi-double, white flowers with golden stamens. AGM. **H** 6m. **S** 4m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5a-11.

81 *ROSA* X *ODORATA* 'MUTABILIS' ROSE
On seeing this come into flower for the first time, a client once dismissed it as 'thin yoghurt'. Three years later she changed her mind and now declares undying passion. Looks good in so many contexts – provided there is some sun. AGM. **H** 2m. **S** 2m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7b-10b.

82 *ROSA* X *ODORATA* (SANGUINEA GROUP) 'BENGAL CRIMSON' ROSE
Floppy flowers of astonishing blood red, set against luxuriant, slightly glossy foliage. This needs careful placing – perhaps mixed with *R.* x *odorata* 'Mutabilis', amber crocosmias and *Euphorbia griffithii*. Intermittent flowers from May to first frosts. AGM. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7. ▷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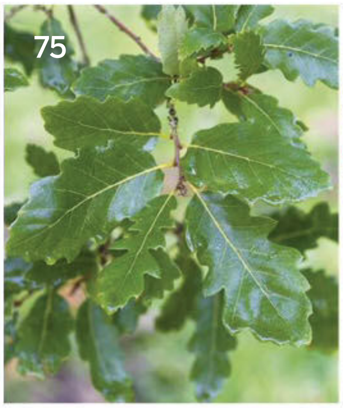
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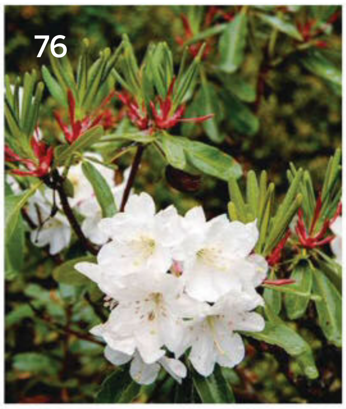
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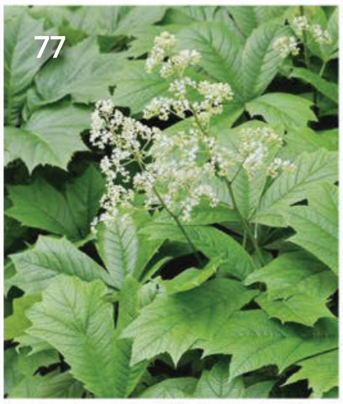
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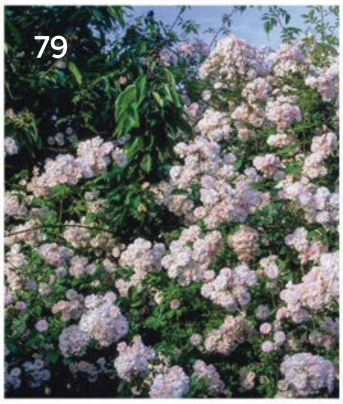
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73 MBP-PLANTS / ALAMY. 75 LEE AVISON / GAP PHOTOS. 76 NATURAL VISIONS / ALAMY. 77 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY. 79 JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY

FIONA RICE / GAP PHOTOS

▷ **83 *ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS* 'SISSINGHURST BLUE'** PERENNIAL
An excellent blue rosemary, reasonably hardy, with flowers of a clear blue. AGM. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Well-drained, poor to moderately fertile soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

84 *RUDBECKIA MAXIMA* PERENNIAL
A handsome, but fickle rudbeckia. Some sulk after a few years and stop flowering, others regularly throw up a 1.8m stem culminating in a floppy, yellow daisy with a priapic central boss that persists long after the petals drop. Leaves are ovoid, waxy grey and very beautiful. **H** 2m. **S** 60cm. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

85 *SALIX EXIGUA* SHRUB
An extremely graceful, shrubby willow with slender, grey leaves. It can sucker, but is relatively easy to keep under control. It casts the lightest of shade so can be used to give height among perennials. **H** 4m. **S** 5m. **C** Very deep, moist, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Spring. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-6b.

86 *SALVIA NEMOROSA* 'AMETHYST' PERENNIAL
One of the best of many fine cultivars of the species. A very abundant salvia with masses of soft, purplish-pink flowers over a long period from the end of June. A very accommodating colour. AGM. **H** 1m. **S** 60cm. **C** Moderately fertile, moist, well-drained soil; full sun/light-dappled shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.

> Schizophragma integrifolium, *with its pale-green flower heads and tear-shaped bracts, is arrestingly beautiful and different*

87 *SALVIA X JAMENSIS* 'NACHTVLINDER' PERENNIAL
A recently bred salvia of Mexican parentage maintaining a twiggy framework over winter. The foliage is undistinguished but the small flowers of a rich, velvety reddish purple borne over the whole summer are quite luscious. **H** 1m. **S** 50cm. **C** Moderately fertile, moist but well-drained soil; full sun/dappled shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H4, USDA 9a-10b.

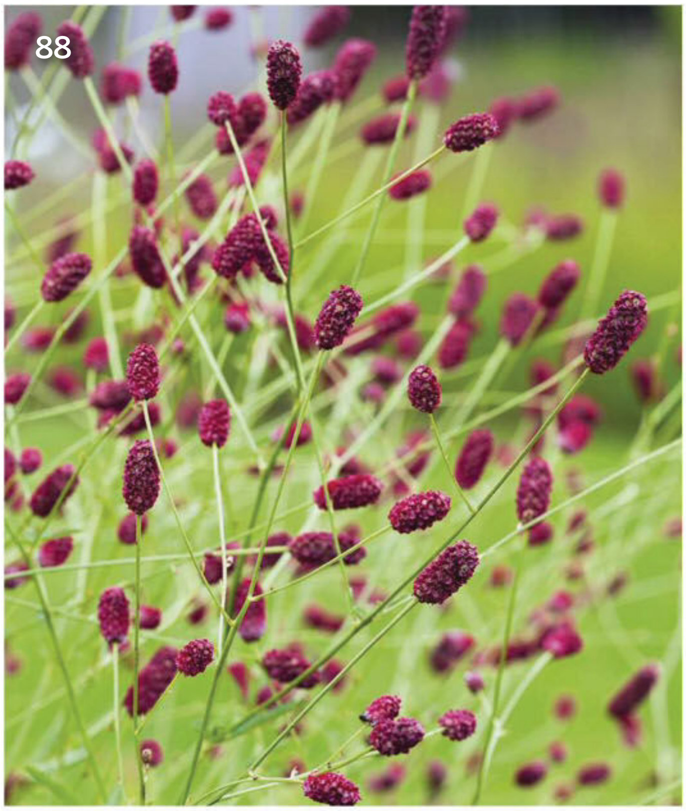
88 *SANGUISORBA OFFICINALIS* 'RED THUNDER' PERENNIAL
This, I think, is the best of medium-height, dark-red sanguisorbas. Has very refined foliage, and in late summer masses of button flowers on the thinnest of stems. **H** 1.2m. **S** 60cm. **C** Moderately fertile, moist, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

89 *SARCOCOCCA CONFUSA* SHRUB
Quite a humble, lumpy plant but forming satisfactory mounds of neatly arching, glossy foliage with wonderful scented flowers in February. AGM. **H** 1.5m. **S** 1.5m. **C** Good, well-drained soil; shade or part shade. **SI** Winter. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

90 *SASSAFRAS ALBIDUM* TREE/SHRUB
A large shrub with juvenile leaves often shaped like a glove with two very unequal lobes; they have a delightful fresh, lemony taste. Flowers are nondescript. **H** 20m. **S** 10m. **C** Moist, fertile soil; sun or part shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

91 *SCHIZOPHRAGMA INTEGRIFOLIUM* CLIMBER
Very handsome, heart-shaped leaves, large and pale-green, flower heads with white tear-shaped bracts, clinging like a climbing hydrangea. Arrestingly beautiful and different. AGM. **H** 12m. **S** 4m. **C** Moderately fertile, moist, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

92 *STIPA CALAMAGROSTIS* GRASS
One of the most elegant of grasses for dry gardens where it will stand up at 50cm. Given moisture it can grow almost twice as high but flops, although stands up again in later summer when the arching, airy seedheads are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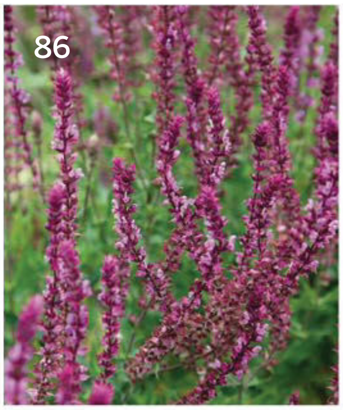
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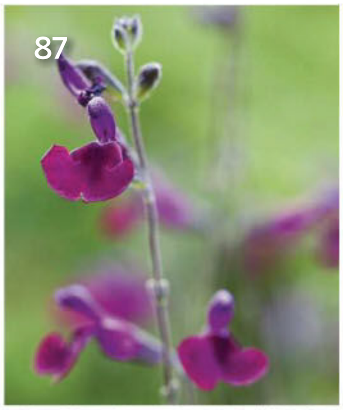
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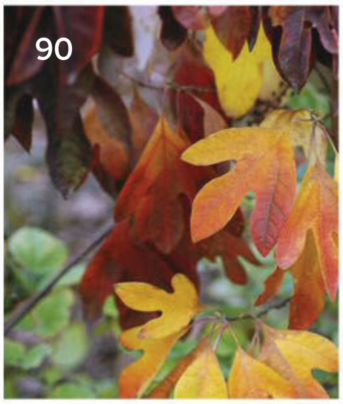
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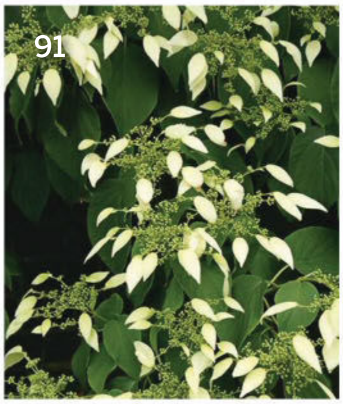
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86 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY, 87 MARIANNE MAJERUS GARDEN IMAGES, 88 RACHEL WARNE, 90 BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY, 91 FLORAPIX / ALAMY

infused with gold. **H** 1m. **S** 1.2m. **C** Moderately fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

93 *SYRINGA* X *CHINENSIS* SHRUB
Many lilacs suffer from both coarse foliage and ugly spent flower heads. Not this one. It's smaller than most of the hybrid lilacs, the flower is finer and there isn't a whisper of brown in the seedhead that comes after the pinky, lilac, well-scented flower is done. *S.* x *chinensis* 'Saugeana' is a richer colour. **H** 3m. **S** 3m. **C** Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 4a-9b.

94 *TAXUS BACCATA* SHRUB/TREE
It would be obtuse of me to exclude yew. The finest of all hedging and quicker in growth than we sometimes give it credit. My hedges began to take on an elephantine look after just a decade; now they are like bloated caterpillars sagging under the weight of a good lunch. AGM. **H** 20m. **S** 10m. **C** All well-drained soils. **SI** Year round. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 5b-8b.

95 *THALICTRUM DELAVAYI* 'ALBUM'
PERENNIAL
A plant of supreme elegance and delicacy. In spring and summer the fresh green dissected foliage lights up any dull corner and then the flower is of pure white in a *Gypsophila*-like cloud. **H** 1.2m. **S** 60cm. **C** Moist soil; partial shade. **SI** Autumn. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

96 *TULIPA* 'ABU HASSAN' BULB
The individual flower can't claim to be the most beautiful but this is a superb tulip for the garden. With its rusty red colouring and amber edge to the petals it mediates wonderfully between purples and oranges. Try using with other tulips, such as 'Ballerina' and 'Paul Scherer', in as generous numbers as your space and budget allows. **H** 45cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Spring. **HR** USDA 3a-8b.

97 *TULIPA SPRENGERI* BULB
This June-flowering tulip has smart, glossy leaves and bright-red flowers with pointed petals. Refined and strident in equal measure. The backs of the petals have an orangey sheen to them, which gives an almost two-tone look. It seeds around quite liberally so while expensive to buy, perseverance over a decade or two can produce great dividends. AGM. **H** 30cm. **S** 10cm. **C** Moist, well-drained soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

98 *VERONICASTRUM VIRGINICUM* 'LAVENDELTURM' PERENNIAL
Perhaps the strongest of the tall veronicastrums, but responds well to a Chelsea chop in May if you want something smaller. The foliage emerges early and handsome. Flowers are white to pale mauve in a tall spike and the seedheads persist well into winter, forming dark-brown spikes. Looks good for 11 months. **H** 2m. **S** 45cm. **C** Moist, moderately fertile soil; full sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 5a-9b.

99 *VIBURNUM BETULIFOLIUM* SHRUB
A quiet, graceful shrub for most of the year, transformed in autumn by great hanging trusses of redcurrant-like fruits. Spectacular. **H** 3m. **S** 3m. **C** Moderately fertile, moist, well-drained soil; full sun or part shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** USDA 2a-9b.

100 *WISTERIA FLORIBUNDA* F. *MULTIJUGA* CLIMBER
One of the most spectacular of all wisterias with flowers of soft violet-blue that hang down up to a metre. Needs careful placing on a wall or structure tall enough to do it justice. Scented, sublime. AGM. **H** 9m. **S** 3m. **C** Fertile, moist, well-drained soil; sun/partial shade. **SI** Summer. **HR** RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

Useful information

Find out more about Tom's work at **tomstuartsmith.co.uk**

Reader offer

Readers can enjoy a 15 per cent discount at Crocus (**crocus.co.uk**), which offers many of the plants chosen by Tom. For details **see page 115**.

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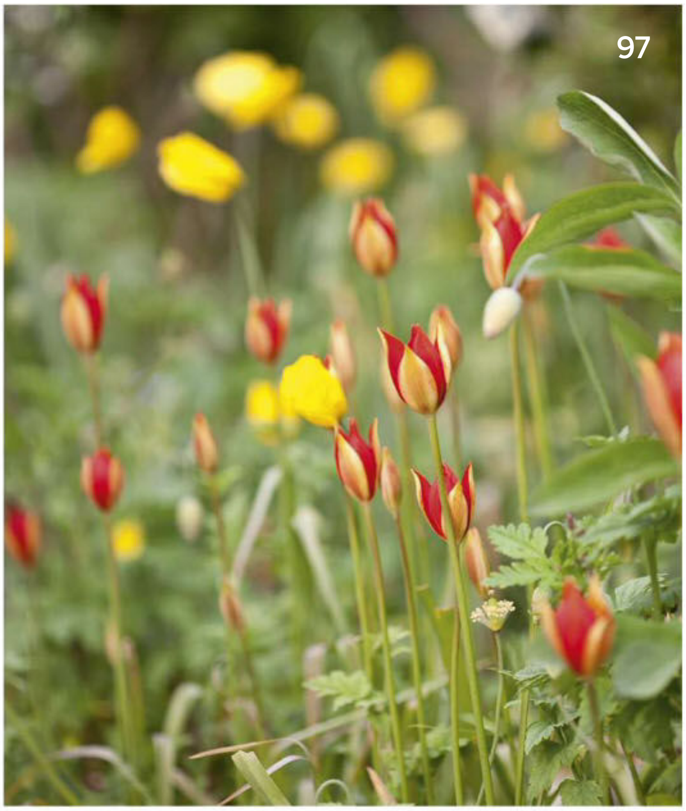
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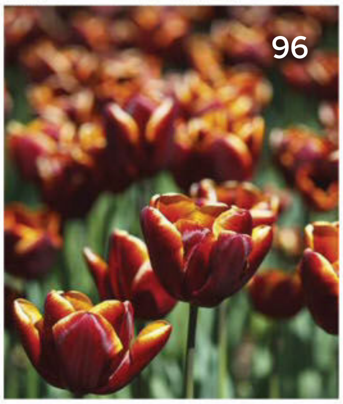
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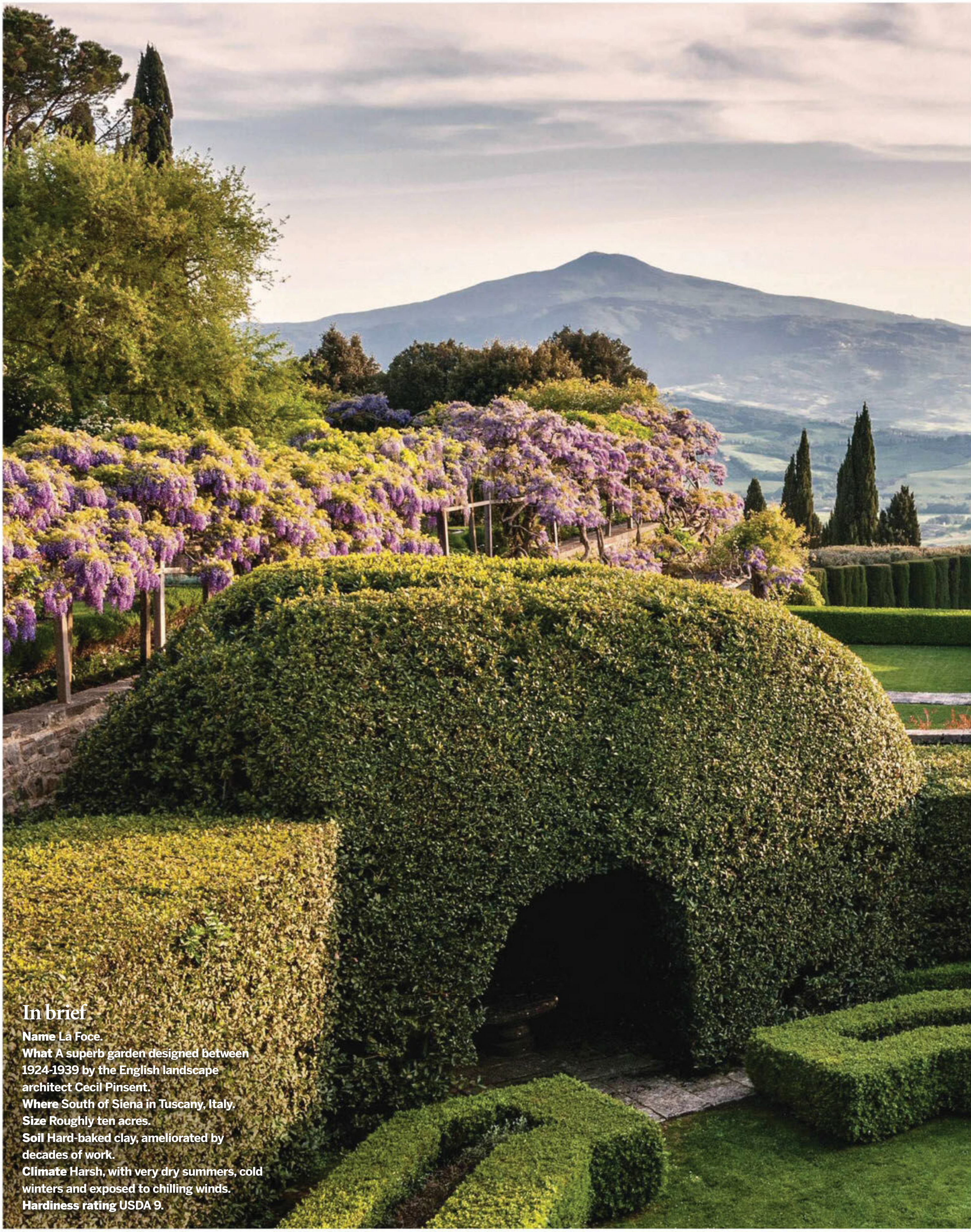
93 BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY, 95 JASON INGRAM, 96 JAN SMITH / GAP PHOTOS, 97 SHARON PEARSON, 99 JENNY LILLY / GAP PHOTOS



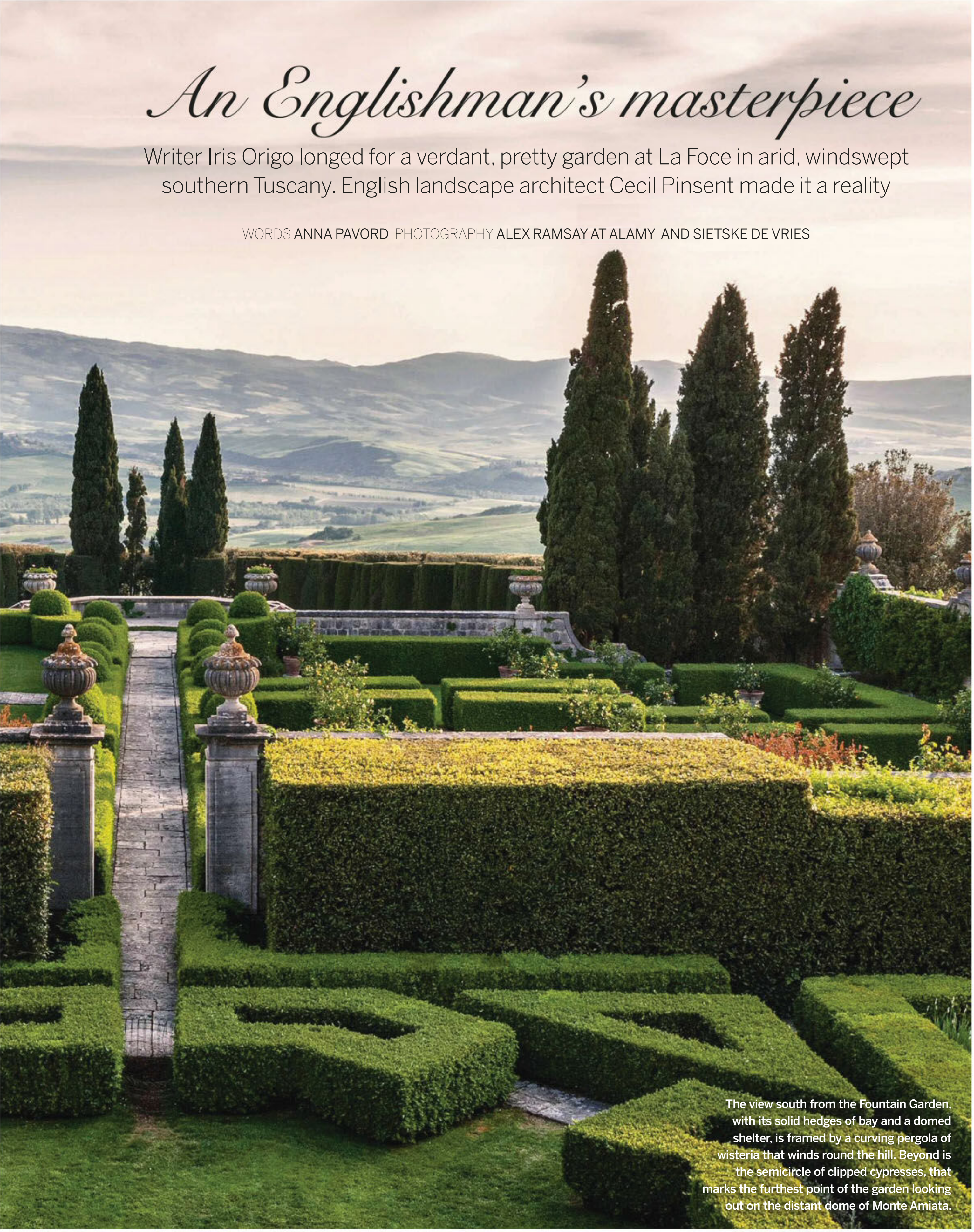
In brief

Name La Foce.
What A superb garden designed between 1924-1939 by the English landscape architect Cecil Pinsent.
Where South of Siena in Tuscany, Italy.
Size Roughly ten acres.
Soil Hard-baked clay, ameliorated by decades of work.
Climate Harsh, with very dry summers, cold winters and exposed to chilling winds.
Hardiness rating USDA 9.

An Englishman's masterpiece

Writer Iris Origo longed for a verdant, pretty garden at La Foce in arid, windswept southern Tuscany. English landscape architect Cecil Pinsent made it a reality

WORDS ANNA PAVORD PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX RAMSAY AT ALAMY AND SIETSKE DE VRIES



The view south from the Fountain Garden, with its solid hedges of bay and a domed shelter, is framed by a curving pergola of wisteria that winds round the hill. Beyond is the semicircle of clipped cypresses, that marks the furthest point of the garden looking out on the distant dome of Monte Amiata.

La Foce is the Italian garden made famous by the writer, Iris Origo, who came here as a young bride in 1924. It sits, not in the rich, lush part of Tuscany, but in the much harsher country called the Crete Senesi, south of Siena. It was, as she wrote, 'a land without mercy and without shade'.

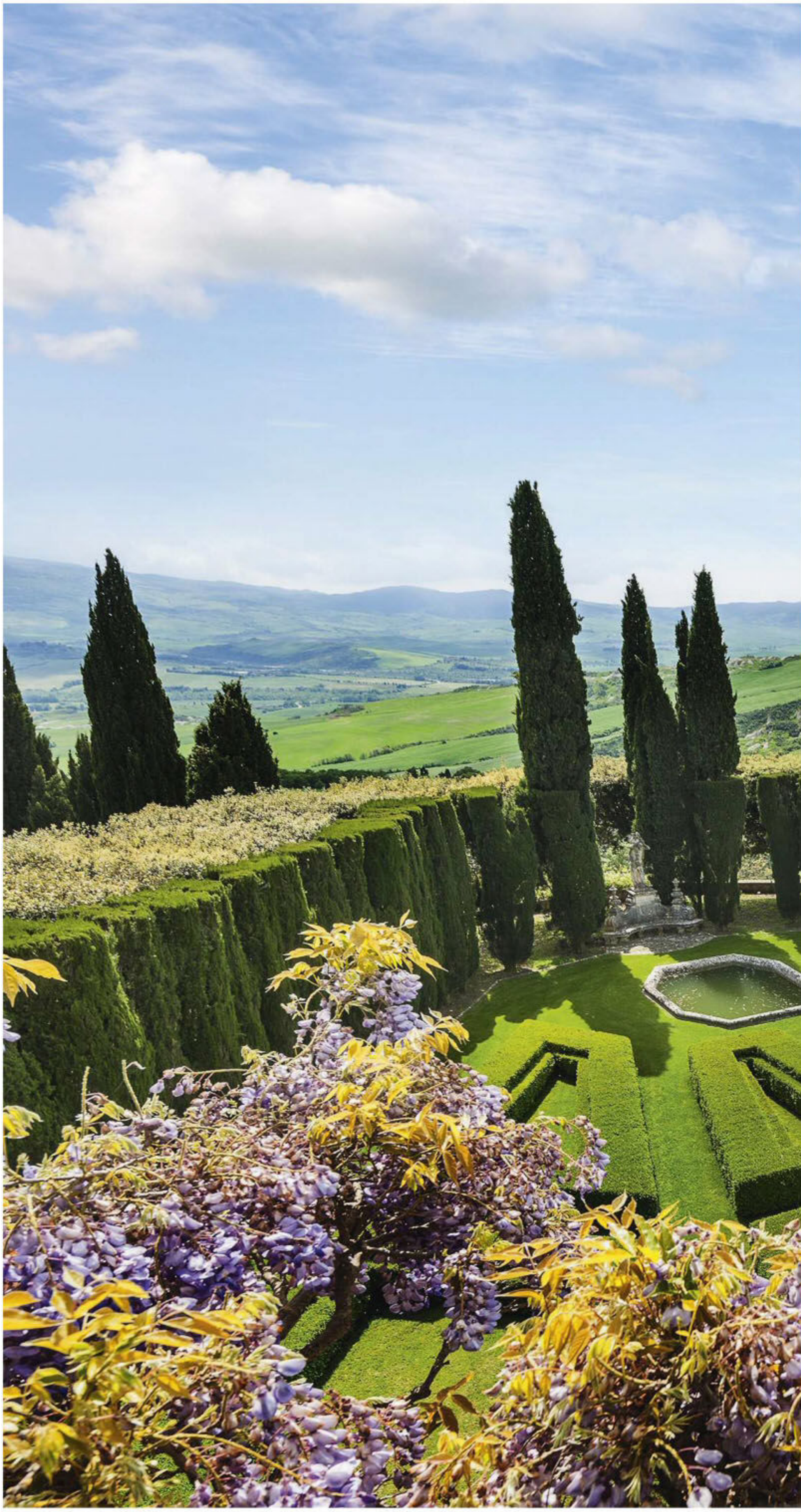
In her classic memoir, *Images and Shadows*, Iris describes how she looked out over this dry, windy landscape and longed for 'green English fields and big trees – and most of all, for a pretty house and garden to come home to in the evening.' The man who made that dream come true was the English landscape architect Cecil Pinsent.

Iris had grown up with her Anglo-Irish mother at the Villa Medici in Florence. When she got engaged to Antonio Origo, an Italian marquis, her grandmother bought them the 3,500 acres of the La Foce estate, set on the high, arid windswept land between the river Ombrone and the Tiber near Montepulciano.

Pinsent had worked for several of the English and American expatriates in Florence, but La Foce is his masterpiece. He designed the house, originally no more than an inn, as well as the garden, and in the years he worked there (1924-1939) La Foce acquired a powerful spirit of place, with the gardens gathering round the house like a protecting carapace.

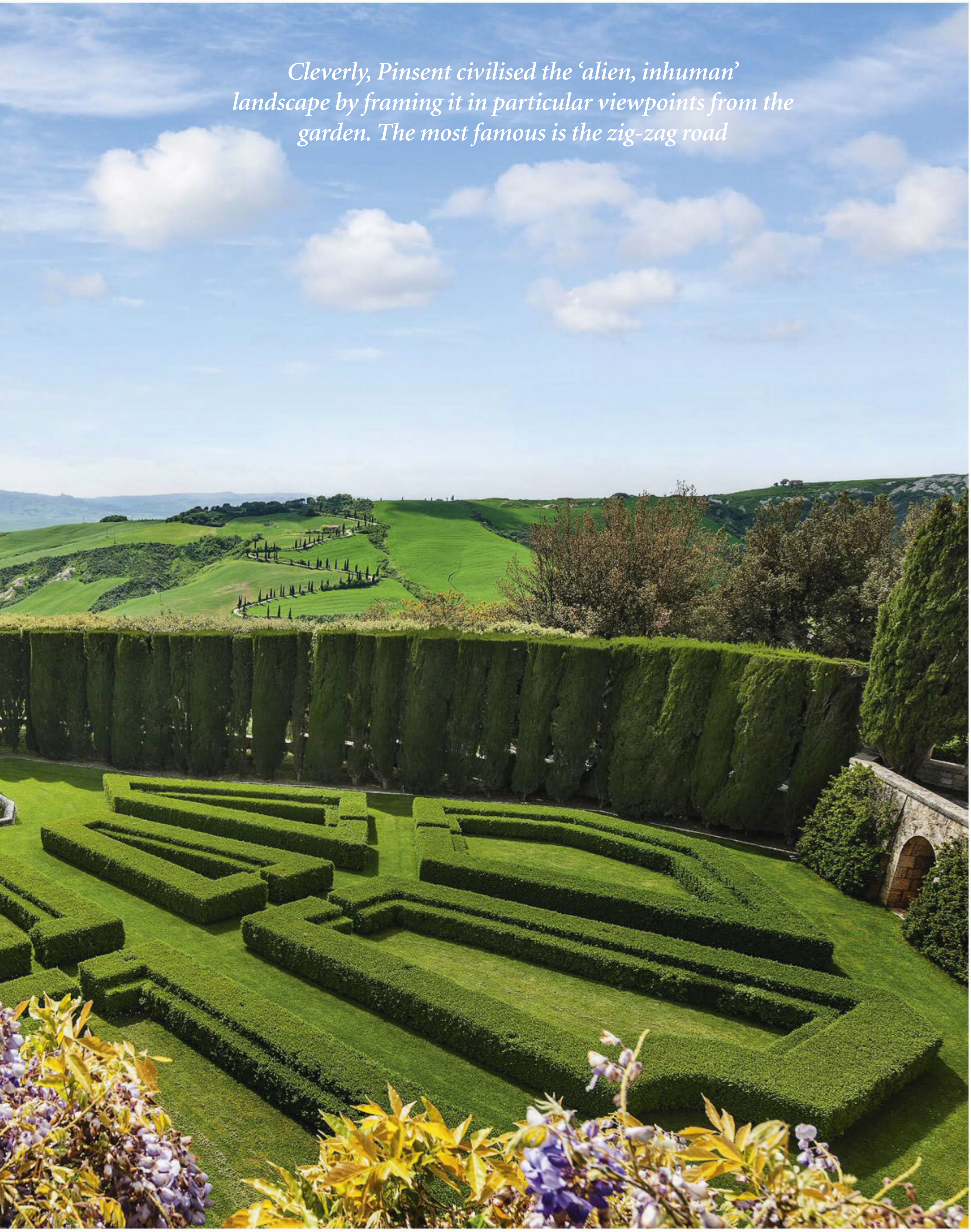
Work on the garden only became possible when a pipe was laid to bring water from an abundant spring six miles away and it continued in phases until war broke out in 1939. Cleverly, Pinsent civilised the 'alien, inhuman' landscape by framing it in particular viewpoints from the garden. The most famous is the zig-zag road that he laid out as a vista from the 'wild' garden behind

Continued on page 56 ▷



CORBIS PREMIUM RF / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The Lower Garden, made by Cecil Pinsent in 1939, was the final addition to La Foce. Double box hedges underline the geometric form and a cypress hedge protects the garden from the road below. Beyond is the famous zig-zag of cypresses ascending the hill, a view reproduced on a million postcards.



Cleverly, Pinsent civilised the 'alien, inhuman' landscape by framing it in particular viewpoints from the garden. The most famous is the zig-zag road

Cecil Pinsent (1884-1963) garden designer

Cecil Pinsent had the good fortune to find a powerful patron while in his early twenties. American art historian Bernard Berenson asked him to make a garden at **Villa I Tatti** near Florence (itatti.harvard.edu). Berenson was one of the many expatriates who adopted Italy as their cultural home.

The Green Garden at I Tatti was Pinsent's first attempt to recreate a garden in the early Renaissance style. His work there, which was on an incredibly steep site, enabled him to explore the monumental, pared-down formality that later became his trademark.

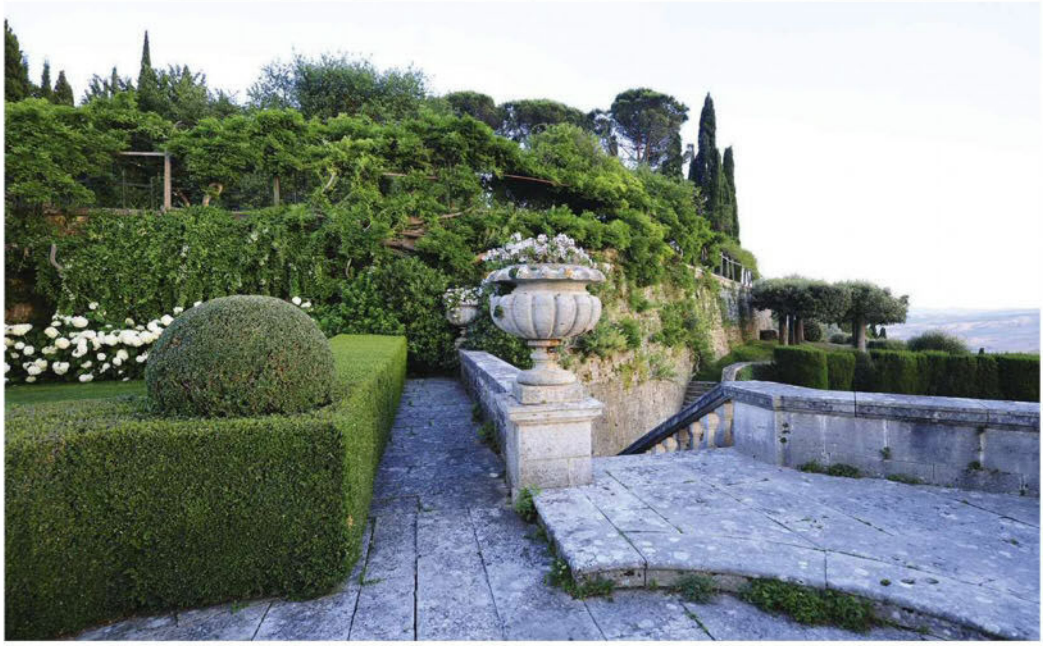
The Berensons recommended Pinsent to Iris Origo's mother, Lady Sybil Cutting, who had arrived in Florence in 1910 as a young widow. Expatriates liked villas with Medici connections and Lady Sybil had one of the greats – **Villa Medici** itself. When Lady Sybil moved in, the top terrace was divided into three grass rectangles, punctuated with lemon trees and two immense paulownias. To the west of the house Pinsent made a *giardino segreto* with a simple geometric layout with plain box-edged beds around an elegant oval fountain.

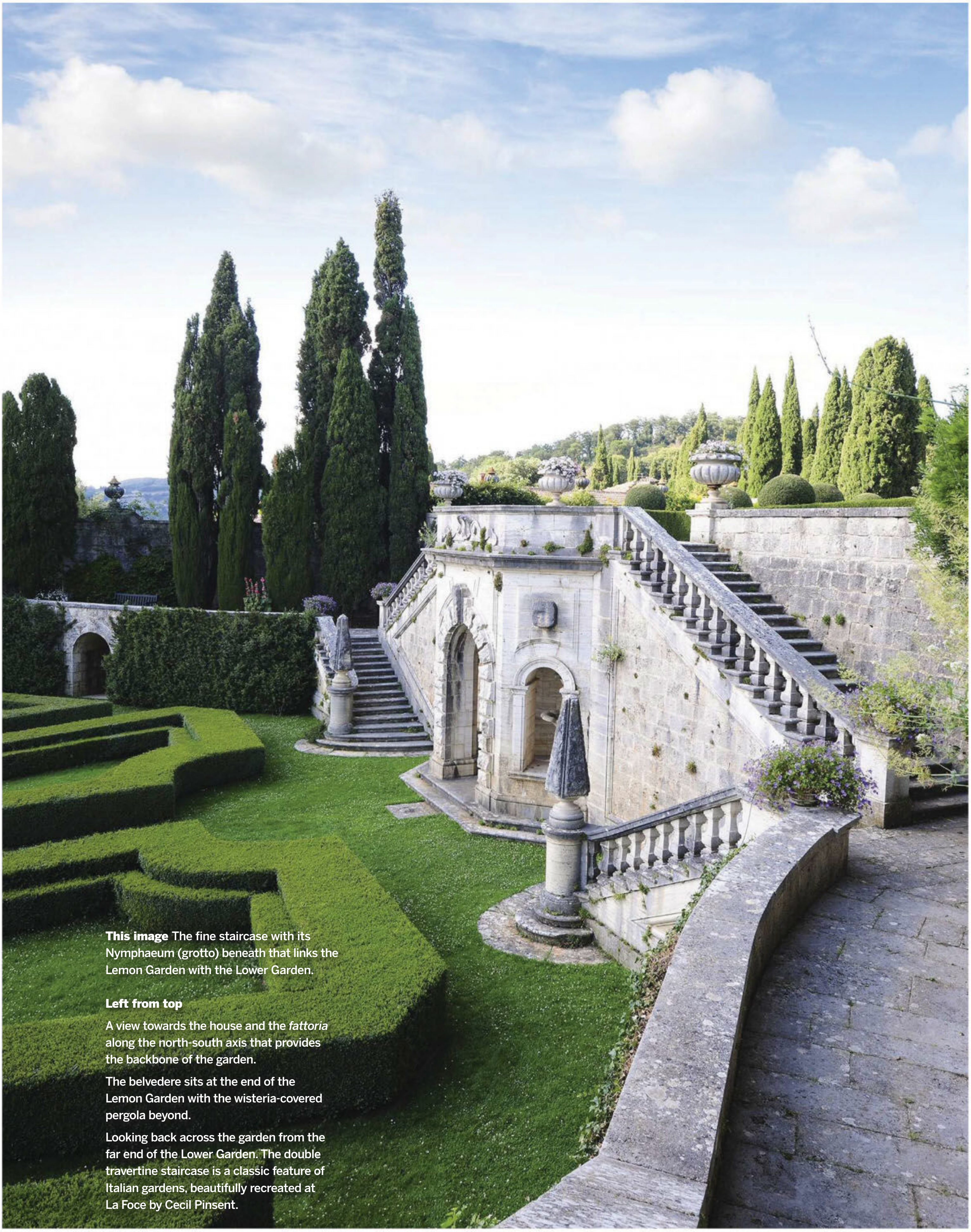
During his years in Florence, Pinsent worked on eight major gardens, including **Villa Le Balze** in Fiesole, where he started work in 1913. He created both house and garden from scratch, working on a site that was even steeper and narrower than the garden at I Tatti. It is enchanting. In the Orange Garden, he used the traditional technique of *ciottolato* (a kind of mosaic) to make a grotto and four medallion busts.

At the **Villa Capponi**, Pinsent modernised the villa that had previously belonged to Lady Scott of Ancram, grandmother of the late Queen Mother. He got involved in the early 1930s and added a swimming pool screened by cypresses that had elegant dolphins spouting water at either end.

Construction of La Foce's double staircase.

IMAGES COURTESY OF LA FOCE





This image The fine staircase with its Nymphaeum (grotto) beneath that links the Lemon Garden with the Lower Garden.

Left from top

A view towards the house and the *fattoria* along the north-south axis that provides the backbone of the garden.

The belvedere sits at the end of the Lemon Garden with the wisteria-covered pergola beyond.

Looking back across the garden from the far end of the Lower Garden. The double travertine staircase is a classic feature of Italian gardens, beautifully recreated at La Foce by Cecil Pinsent.

▷ the house. Lined with cypresses, this has now become one of the most photographed views in Tuscany, a picture you'll find on almost every postcard stand in Italy.

The formal garden at La Foce, now home to Iris's daughter, Benedetta, lies in a series of enclosures on the south side of the house accessed by a stone ramp, made from the beautiful travertine stone that is a speciality around Siena. Next to the house is the fountain garden where a high wall protects an elegant dolphin splashing in a boat-shaped bowl.

Tall pillars topped with vases (designed, as is the fountain, by Pinsent) mark the entrance to the Lemon Garden. This was in place by 1933, with huge lemon trees in terracotta pots set on stone plinths. Roses, honeysuckle and *Trachelospermum jasminoides* smother the retaining walls. It is, as Benedetta says, a "high maintenance garden, but also a garden to live in, a place to enjoy, as my mother enjoyed it."

One of the great moments at La Foce is the flowering of the wisteria on the curving 180m-long pergola that follows the contours of the hill, providing a vital spine in the design of the garden. From here you get dramatic views out over the landscape to Monte Amiata and beyond. The pergola, in place by 1938, is pierced by a stone staircase, leading to a lookout at the top of the hill.

Gradually the formal nature of the design with stone-edged flower beds alongside the pergola, drifts into a wilder woodland garden where the hillside is planted with Judas trees, flowering quinces, forsythia, pomegranates, shrub roses, and herbs such as lavender, thyme and rosemary. The path leads eventually to a small peaceful cemetery where the Origos buried their only son, Gianni, who died of meningitis when he was just seven years old.

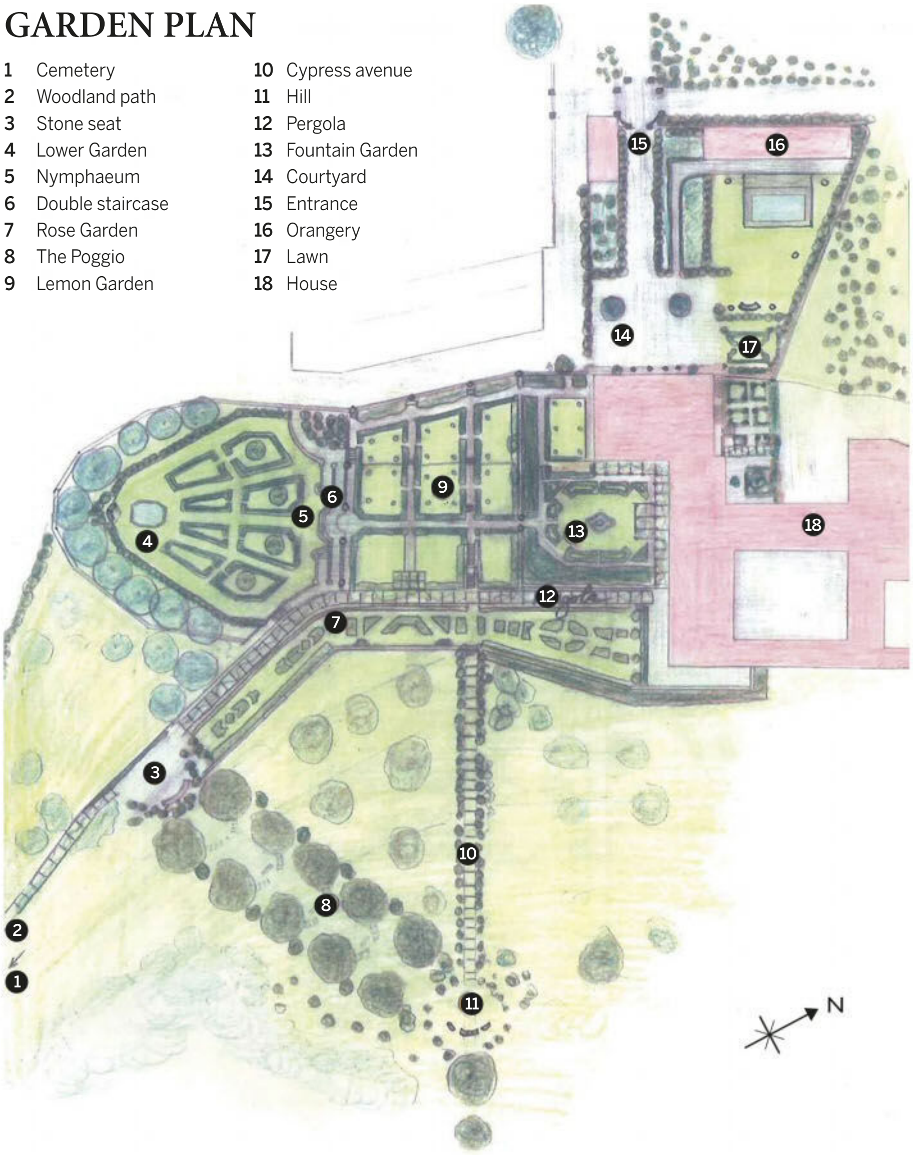
Pinsent's final gift to La Foce was the wedge-shaped Magnolia Garden in 1939 – now without its magnolias and known as ▷

The magnificent old *Wisteria sinensis* trained on the long pergola that curves from the house around a hill to end in a woodland path. The purple flowers coming into bloom is an annual highlight at La Foce. Below, the clipped box domes of the Lemon Garden.

One of the great moments at La Foce is the flowering of the wisteria on the curving pergola that provides a vital spine in the design of the garden

GARDEN PLAN

1 Cemetery
2 Woodland path
3 Stone seat
4 Lower Garden
5 Nymphaeum
6 Double staircase
7 Rose Garden
8 The Poggio
9 Lemon Garden
10 Cypress avenue
11 Hill
12 Pergola
13 Fountain Garden
14 Courtyard
15 Entrance
16 Orangery
17 Lawn
18 House



▷ the Lower Garden – that juts out at the end of the garden like the prow of a ship. A mighty double staircase, with a nymphaeum (grotto) underneath, links it to the Lemon Garden above. Once again, and rather brilliantly, Pinsent was able to adapt his design to the lie of the land, following the contours of a difficult site. There is a remarkable homogeneity to his work at La Foce, due to the fact that throughout the garden he used the same travertine stone, quarried in Rapolano. It helps, too, that he designed all the artefacts – seats, vases, urns, fountains – that decorate his expertly conceived creation.

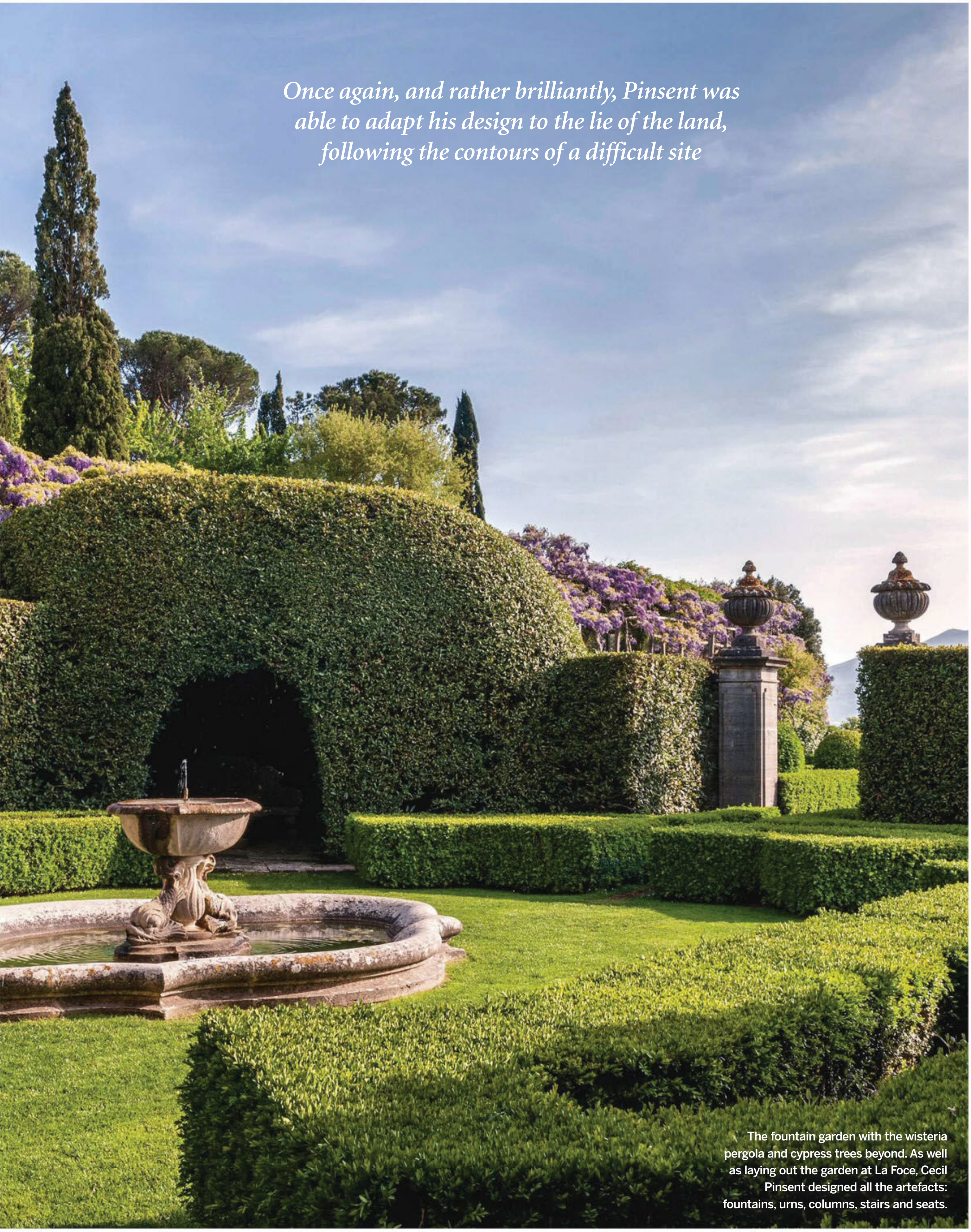
La Foce is a place of staggering beauty but also of extraordinary peace. Here, you find the most perfect balance, the most acute synthesis of all that the English could give to Italy and all that they learned from it. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

La Foce, 53042 Chianciano Terme, Italy.
Tel +39 (0)578 69101
Email info@lafoce.com
Website lafoce.com
Open Wednesday afternoons and every weekend from April to the beginning of November. There are guided tours and admission is €10. A music festival is held at La Foce every July (itslafoce.org).

RECOMMENDED READING

- ***Images and Shadows*** by Iris Origo
A memoir of the writer's time at La Foce.
- ***War in Val d'Orcia*** by Iris Origo
A diary of the German occupation 1943-44.
- ***La Foce: A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany*** by Laurie Olin and Benedetta Origo
A tribute by Iris Origo's daughter Benedetta.



Once again, and rather brilliantly, Pinsent was able to adapt his design to the lie of the land, following the contours of a difficult site

The fountain garden with the wisteria pergola and cypress trees beyond. As well as laying out the garden at La Foce, Cecil Pinsent designed all the artefacts: fountains, urns, columns, stairs and seats.

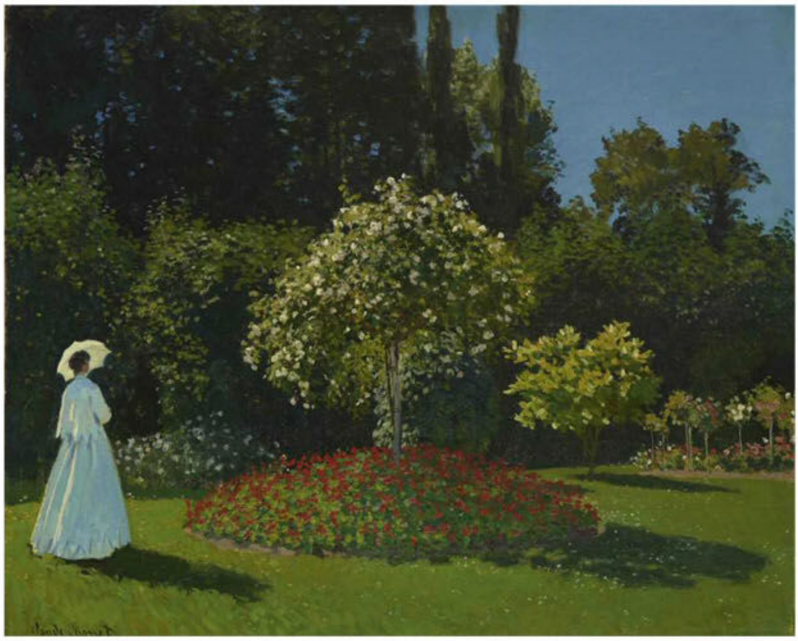
Painting the modern garden

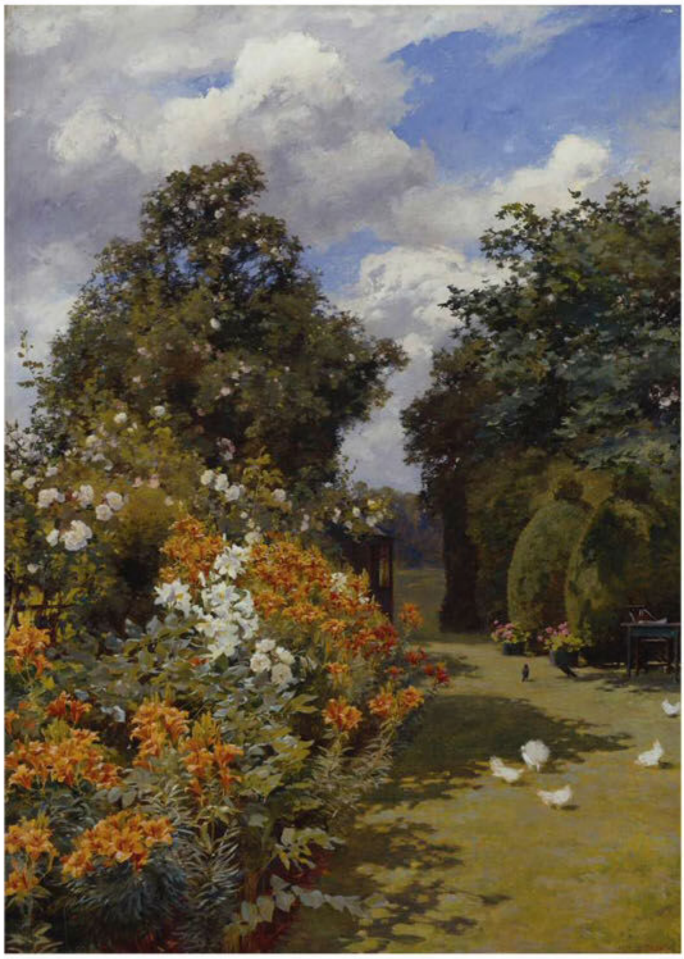
A major exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts explores the role of gardens in the paintings of Claude Monet and his contemporaries

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS

Apart from gardening and daubing, declared the great impressionist painter Claude Monet, he was good at absolutely nothing. Indeed, according to Ann Dumas, curator of Painting the Modern Garden exhibition currently showing at London's Royal Academy, he considered himself a better gardener than painter. Wherever he lived, he made gardens, and as early as the 1860s, a symbiotic relationship was already developing between his efforts as a gardener and his art, a relationship that would find triumphant expression during 30 years of depicting Giverny, his beloved garden in northern France. "The two pursuits defined his life," says Dumas. "He claimed it was his flowers that made him a painter." A delightful canvas by Renoir in 1873 shows Monet in his Argenteuil garden on the outskirts of Paris, busily painting his dahlias: if Renoir does not lie, they are exceptionally tall and well-grown.

Monet, the artist-gardener par excellence, forms the heart of the exhibition, with 35 of his major works, some shown in Britain for the first time. But, as the name suggests, Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse also examines other artists painting the garden during Monet's long working lifetime, spanning the 1860s to the 1920s. Works by other European impressionists contrast with ▷





Clockwise from top left

Claude Monet, *Lady in the Garden*, 1867
This is one of many landscapes Monet painted in the summer of 1867 on the Le Coteaux estate near Le Havre that belonged to his aunt, Marie-Jeanne Lecadre.

*Oil on canvas, 80 x 99 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.
Photo © The State Hermitage Museum. Photography Vladimir Terebenin.*

Claude Monet, *Nymphéas (Waterlilies)*, 1914-15
One of more than 250 paintings that Monet made of his water lily pond at Giverny.

*Oil on canvas, 160.7 x 180.3 cm. Portland Art Museum, Oregon. Museum
Purchase: Helen Thurston Ayer Fund, 59.16. Photo © Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon.*

Auguste Renoir, *The Garden in the Rue Cortot*, *Monmartre*, 1876
Blazing dahlias are the subject of Renoir's painting of a wild garden he discovered in Paris in 1875-76 and used as an outdoor studio.

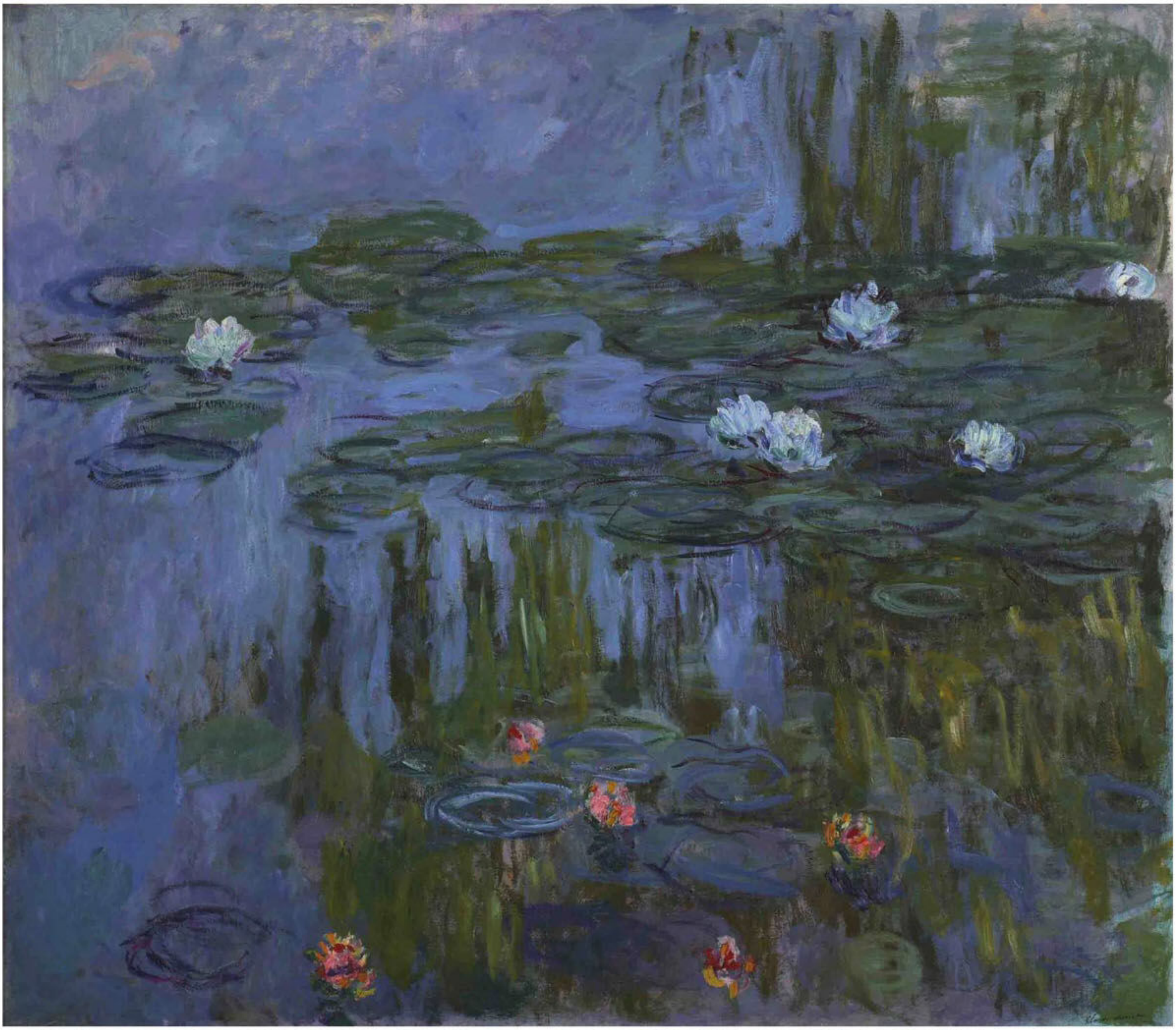
*Oil on canvas, 154.3 x 88.9 cm. Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.
Acquired through the generosity of Mrs Alan M Scaife, 65.35. Photo © 2015 Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh.*

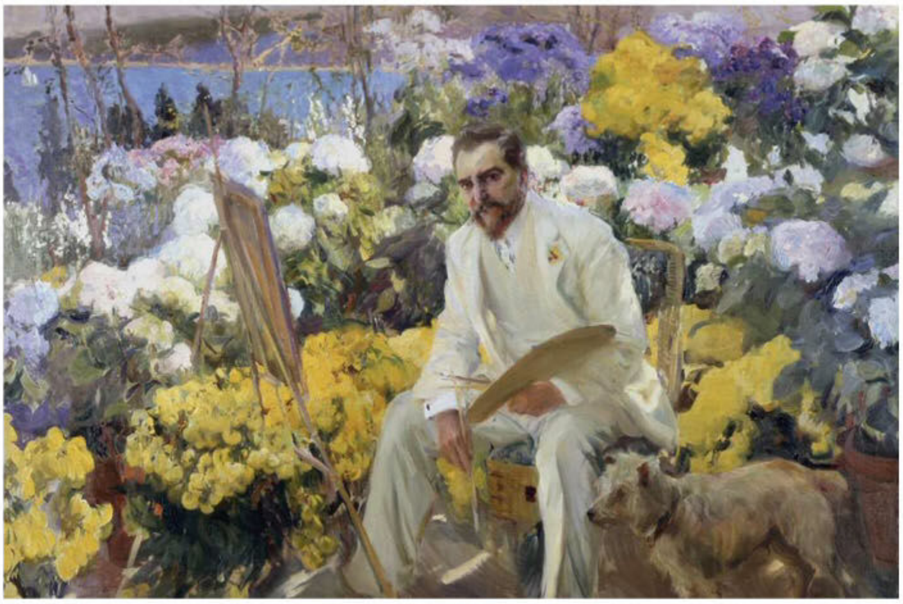
Joaquín Sorolla, *Louis Comfort Tiffany*, 1911
An oil on canvas of the American artist and designer Tiffany painting in his garden on the north shore of Long Island.

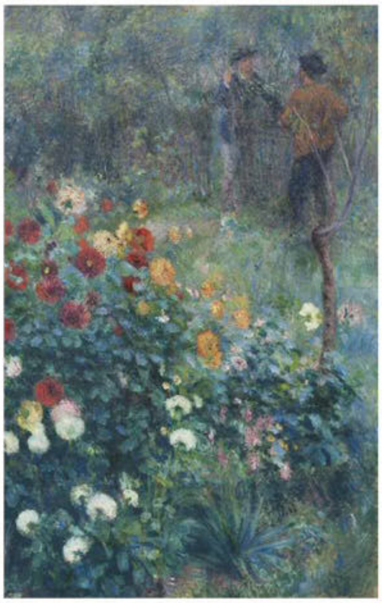
*Oil on canvas, 150 x 225.5 cm. On loan from the Hispanic Society of America, New York, NY.
Photo © Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America, New York.*

Alfred Parsons, *Orange Lilies, Broadway, Worcestershire*, c1911
This painting reflects the revival of the cottage garden developed by William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll in the late 19th century.

*Oil on canvas, 92 x 66 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London.
Photo © Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photography John Hammond.*





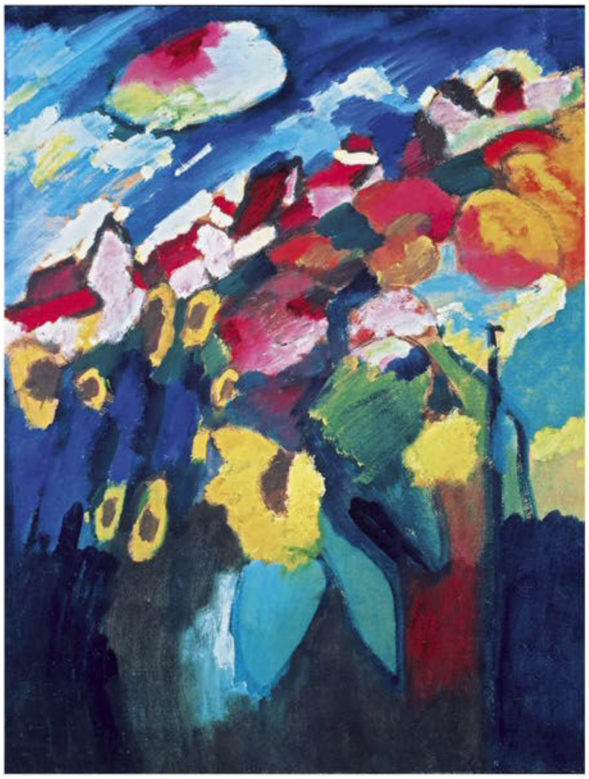


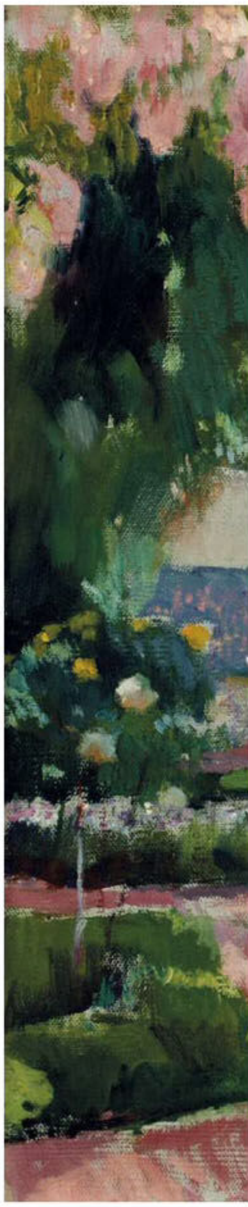
contemporaries, such as Tissot and Sargent, working in a different, more traditional style. There are brooding studies of crumbling aristocratic gardens by the Spaniard Rusiñol, and a sunny chocolate-box depiction of an English cottage garden by Alfred Parsons. (While a high point of British garden design, Dumas observes regretfully, this period is something of a low point in British art.) Then, as we move into a new century, the garden prompts a move away from naturalism towards glorious celebrations of pure colour, finding bold new idioms in Klee and Klimt and the German expressionist Emil Nolde. Most thrilling, perhaps, is Kandinsky's evocation of his garden at Murnau, the yellow blobs still recognisable (just) as sunflowers, painted in 1910 as he is about to plunge into abstraction.

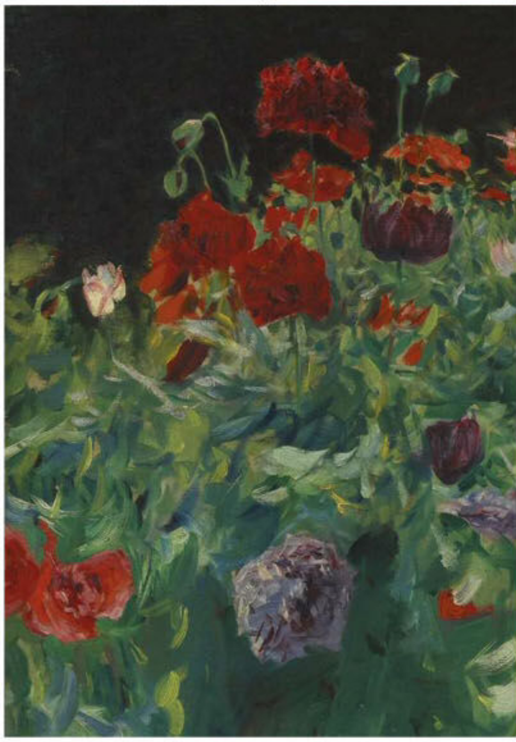
In some ways, the garden seems an obvious subject for the artist – what is it, after all, but the considered juxtaposition of colour and form? But Monet and the Impressionists seem to discover the garden anew. It becomes an outdoor studio, where they can play with the effects of colour and light. For artists such as Bonnard and Vuillard, it is part and parcel of the intimate family life they depict – but more than that, a retreat from encroaching urbanisation, an Arcadian idyll where man can dwell in harmony with nature. Overlaid with poetic and literary associations, the garden ultimately becomes a metaphor for the creative consciousness.

While Bonnard was no gardener, happy to leave his '*jardin sauvage*' to fend for itself, several of the artists represented were accomplished gardeners, for whom their gardens provided an absorbing subject. In Madrid, in the 1890s, Joaquín Sorolla created a paradise garden inspired by the Moorish traditions of Andalusia. In 1909, on the shores of the Wannsee near Berlin, Max Liebermann's garden of self-sown birches and colourful hedged enclosures provided matter for some 200 paintings. At Seebüll, in Denmark, Nolde built a house from which he could observe his garden from every window, writing how he found the colours of flowers so exciting that they stimulated him to paint. Letters, books, photographs and film provide a context for the work, including a memorable image of Kandinsky in shorts, toiling away with his spade.

The exhibition is fascinating in revealing how developments in painting and in garden design follow almost parallel trajectories at this time. Monet's earliest canvas in this show, painted in 1867, depicts the garden of his aunt in Le Havre – a stiff and formal arrangement of standard roses and mounds of scarlet bedding pelargoniums, just







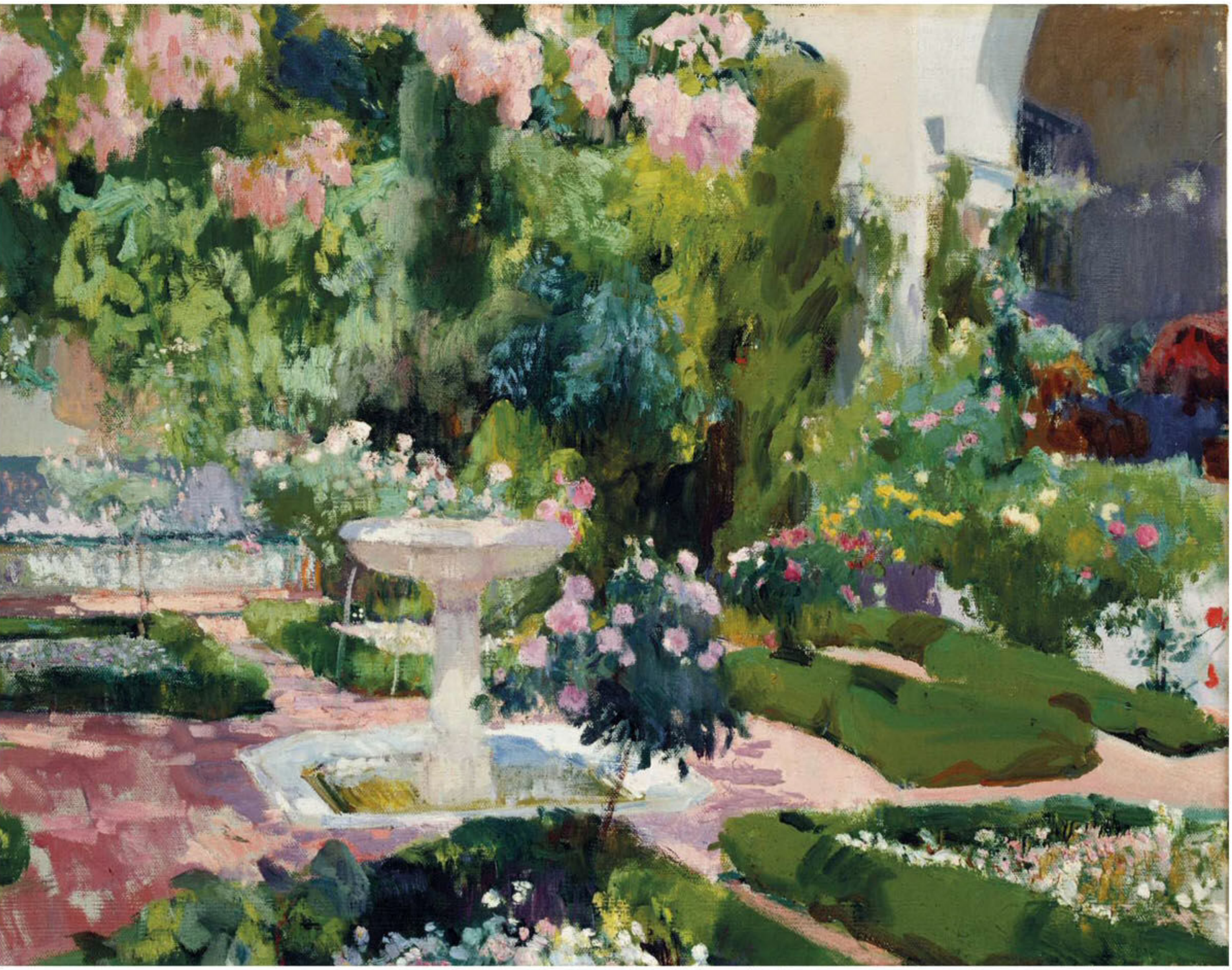
Clockwise from top left

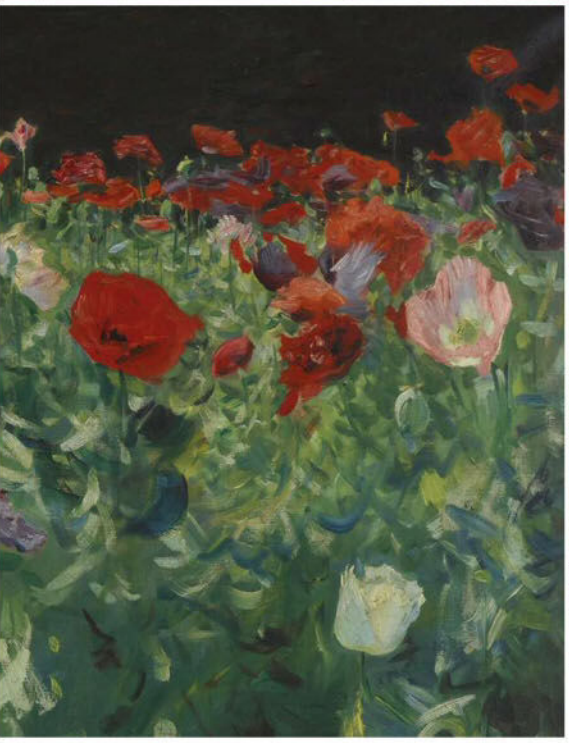
Wassily Kandinsky, *Murnau The Garden II*, 1910
The garden Kandinsky shared with Gabrielle Munthe at Murnau in Bavaria from 1910-12 became the subject of paintings, as this oil, and a lively correspondence.
Oil on cardboard, 67 x 51 cm. Merzbacher Kunststiftung. Photo © Merzbacher Kunststiftung.

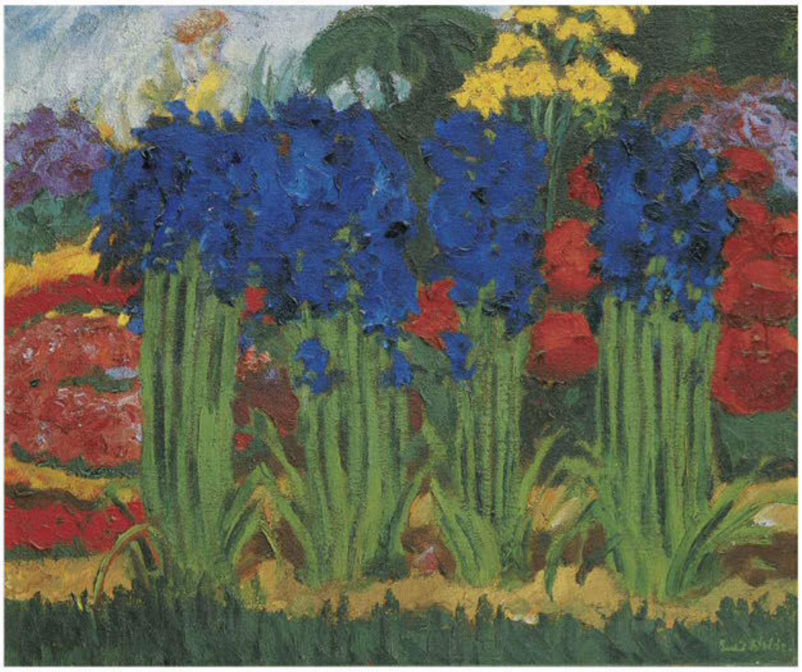
Joaquín Sorolla, *Garden of the Sorolla House*, 1918-19
Sorolla created a paradise garden in Madrid in the 1890s, combining flowers with decorative tiles and paving.
Oil on canvas, 64 x 95 cm. Museo Sorolla, Madrid. Photo © Museo Sorolla.

Emil Nolde, *Flower Garden (O)*, 1922
Nolde's work was dominated by a heightened sense of colour, as you can see in this oil of his garden at Seebüll.
Oil on canvas, 74 x 89.5 cm. Nolde Stiftung Seebüll. © Nolde Stiftung Seebüll.

John Singer Sargent, *Poppies (A Study for 'Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose')*, 1886
While Sargent painted portraits indoors, he ventured outside to paint a handful of pictures of the garden and plants, including this one of poppies.
Oil on canvas, 61.9 x 91.1 cm. Private collection. Photo © Private collection.

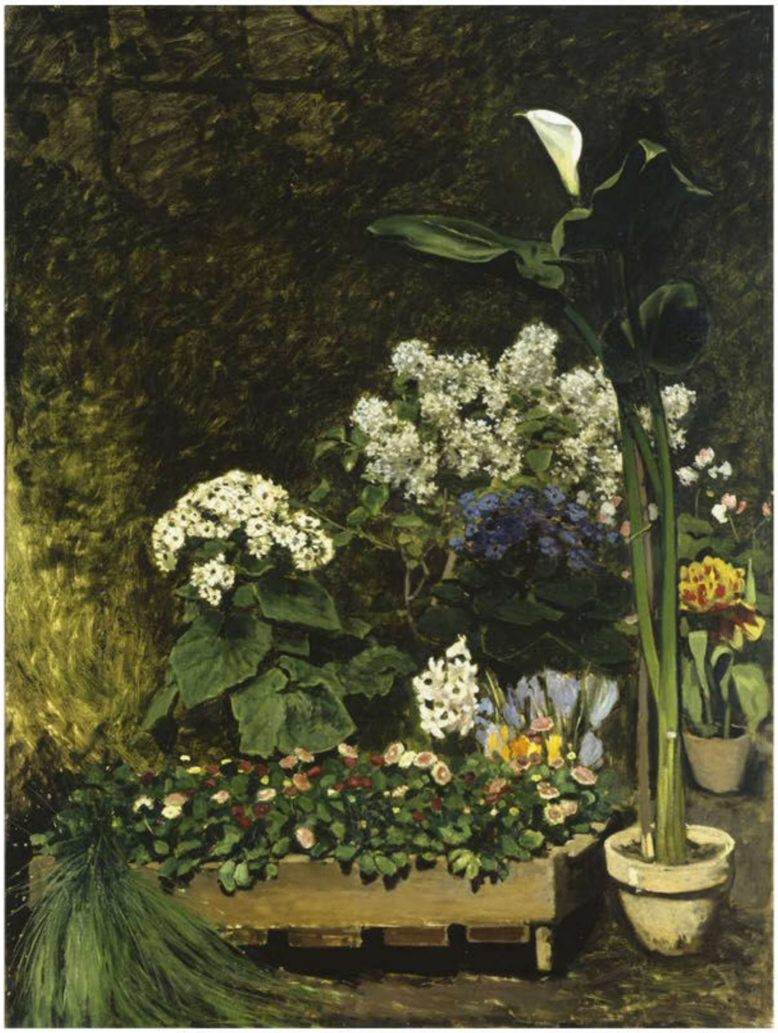


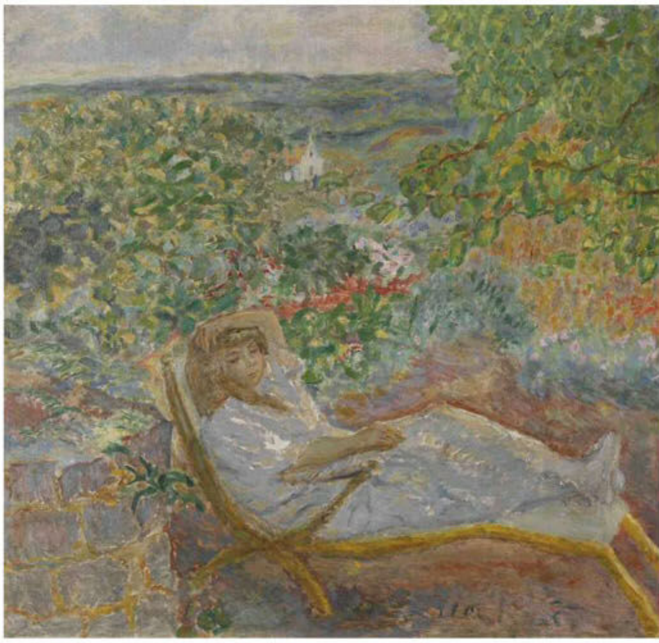




▷ the kind of garden that will be swept away by William Robinson's embrace of a looser, wilder style and Gertrude Jekyll's experiments with surging drifts of colour. Similarly, this precise, naturalistic painting approach will give way, only three years later, to 'impressionistic' experiments with colour and light. (The overlap is clear: Jekyll famously declares herself a painter manqué; while Monet's upper garden at Giverny becomes a living paintbox, laid out like an allotment whose harvest is pure colour.) A different way of seeing gardens becomes apparent in both their creation and depiction.

From 1914, as Europe is torn apart by war, the garden becomes a sanctuary, embodying the values of civilisation in the face of senseless destruction. Monet, painting his huge canvases of water lilies within earshot of the guns, and painfully reminded of his son and step-son at the Front, considers it his patriotic duty to keep on painting, and the day following the Armistice, offers two of these panels to the French nation 'to honour the victory and the peace'. The plan enlarged until in 1926, a few months after his death, 22 paintings were installed in the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris. Three related canvases, however, remained in Monet's studio, and these three paintings, known as the *Agapanthus Triptych* (though no agapanthus remains visible), were dispersed to three museums in America. Reunited in Britain for the first time and hanging together in the RA's rotunda, these colossal canvases (4m wide) bring the exhibition to a dramatic conclusion. No longer simply a refuge from a turbulent world, the garden now expresses the deepest emotions of the human heart. □





USEFUL INFORMATION

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse runs until 20 April.

Address Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, London W1J 0BD.

Tel 020 7300 8090. **Website** royalacademy.org.uk

Tickets Due to high demand, visitors are advised to book in advance.

Exhibition sponsored by BNY Mellon, Partner of the Royal Academy of Arts. Exhibition co-organised by the Royal Academy of Arts and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

• READER EVENT

See page 9 for details of our exclusive reader viewing evening with introductory talk from Royal Academy art historian.

Clockwise from top left

Auguste Renoir, *Flowers in a Greenhouse*, 1864
Flowers grown under glass await bedding out in this painting. The plants include daisies, crocuses, a *Tulipa* 'Keizerskroon' and a tiny white hyacinth, thought to be the newly bred 'L'Innocence'.

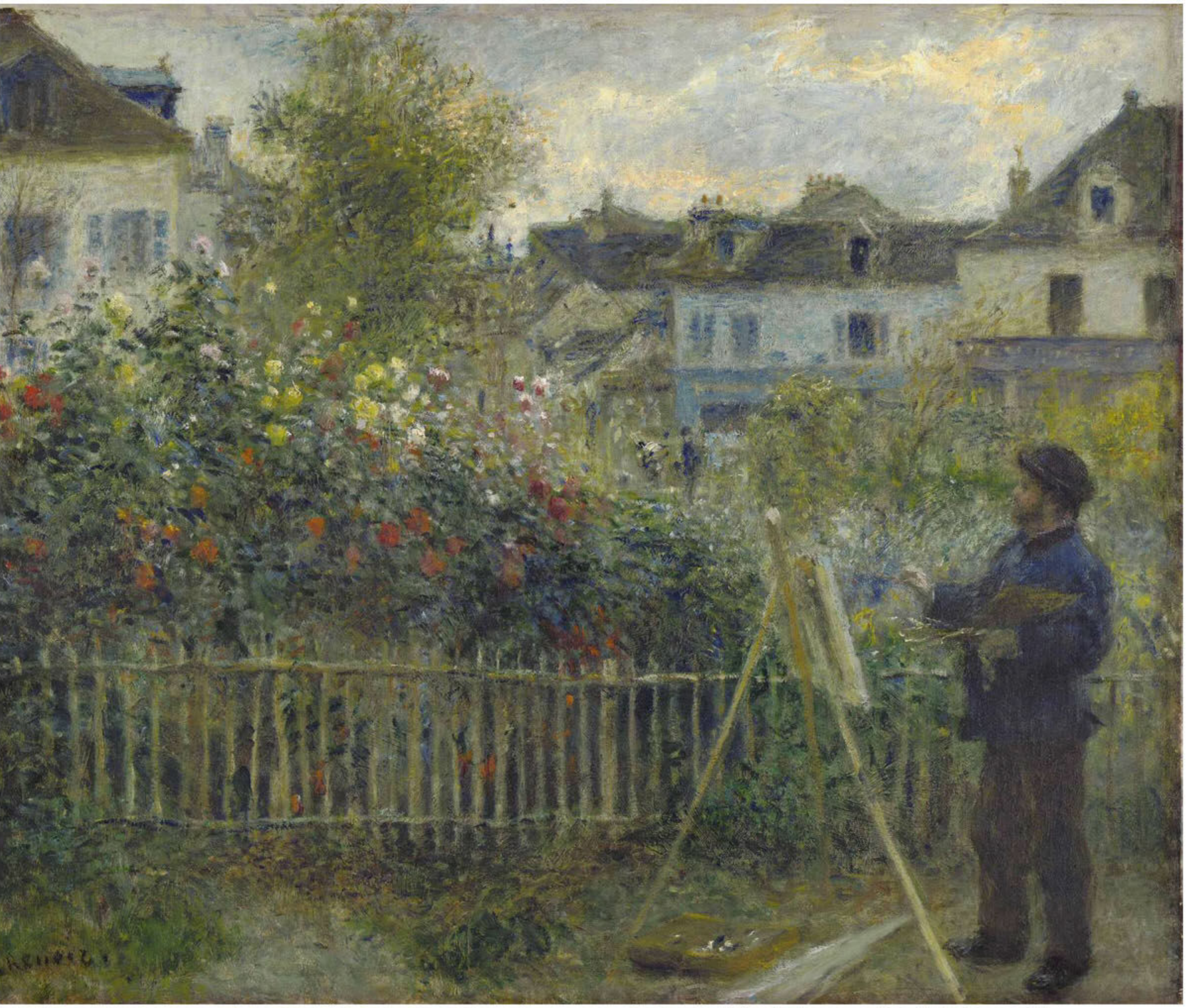
Oil on canvas, 130 x 98 cm. Hamburger Kunsthalle. Photo © SHK / Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk. Photography Elke Walford.

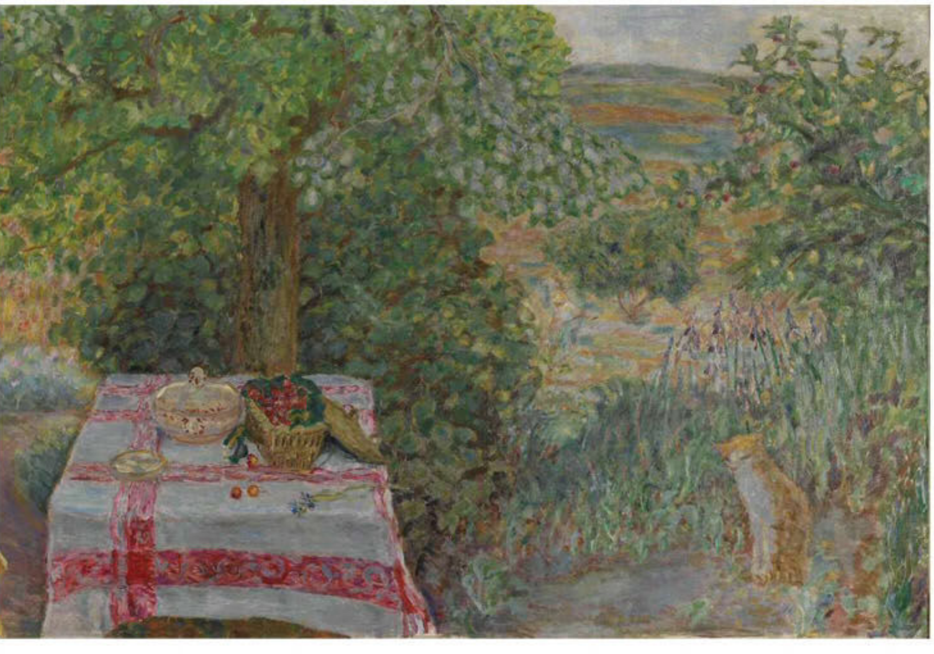
Auguste Renoir, *Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil*, 1873
Renoir's oil on canvas depicts his friend Monet hard at work painting the impressive dahlias in the garden of his rented home in the village of Argenteuil near Paris. *Oil on canvas, 46.7 x 59.7 cm. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. Bequest of Anne Parrish Titzell, 1957.614. Photo © Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.*

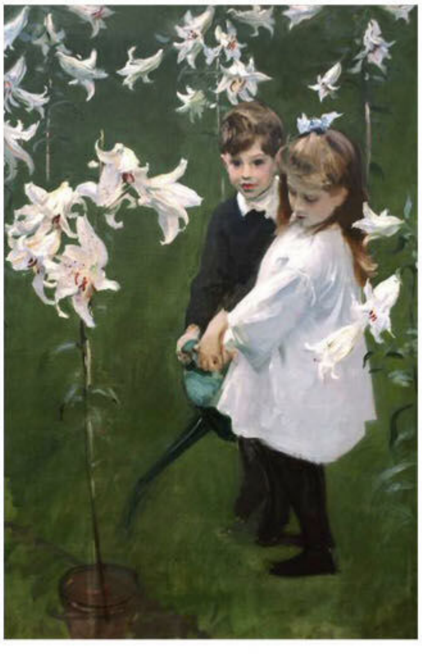
John Singer Sargent, *Garden Study of the Vickers Children*, 1884
In one of 11 portraits he painted of the Vickers family, here Sargent depicts their children, Vincent and Dorothy, amid stalks of lilies as they water the flowers. *Oil on canvas, 138.43 x 91.44 cm. Collection of the Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan. Gift of the Viola E Bray Charitable Trust via Mr and Mrs William L Richards 1972. 47. Photo © Collection of the Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan.*

Pierre Bonnard, *Resting in the Garden (Sieste au jardin)*, 1914
French artist Bonnard always included people in his garden painting. They are less about the depiction of plants than man's relationship with nature.

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo. Photo © Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design/ The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design / © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2015.


Renoir.





Hedging plants

We can sometimes be a bit conservative with our choice of hedging plants but with so many options available it's worth thinking outside the box

WORDS **BUNNY GUINNESS**

Hedging doesn't have to be formal. In this modern parterre garden at Broughton Grange in Oxfordshire, Tom Stuart-Smith has planted an irregular pattern of low box hedges cloud pruned into wavy undulations. The hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) hedge provides a dramatic backdrop.

ANDREW LAWSON

Bunny Guinness is a landscape architect, writer and broadcaster, and a regular panellist on BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time.*

I love planting hedges. These green garden walls can do so much. Dividing spaces, leading the eye, hiding neighbours and providing a magnificent backdrop for planting. They will lift and filter wind, helping to temper our more frequently occurring storms. Wildlife appreciates the safe, dense environment that the solid infrastructure provides too.

When you decide you want to plant a hedge it helps to determine how you want it to work for you. Do you want an above-eye-level, solid, year-round evergreen presence or a low, mid-calf divider of spaces? Or a metre-high barrier that will hide paraphernalia but tempt you to explore further? The size you're aiming for, the degree of formality and see-throughness you want are key factors, but it can be confusing. For example, yew (*Taxus baccata* – see overleaf) is generally thought to be a big, formal giant of a hedge but in David Austin's rose garden it has been used to replace the low, box hedging and works like a dream. Far superior to many other box substitutes.

Once you've decided on your ideal hedge it's natural to want it to be grown up from day one and several companies do offer instant hedges. Elveden, for example, offers several species as 1.8m-high, mature hedges that look as though they have been in place for decades, and its custom-designed growth system seems fool proof. However, with prices starting at £99 per metre, it's not cheap.

For those with more patience who are happy to grow a hedge from young plants, using more plants, rather than less, will greatly speeds things up. My usual spacing for a tall hedge is to plant a double staggered row with 50cm between the plants in the row and 50cm between the rows. To thicken up faster I may run to three rows, although for dwarf box and other small hedges six to seven plants per metre run works well.

If you can run to drip irrigation, this will make all the difference and in the early years will speed up growth phenomenally. Make ▷

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ sure the soil is free of weeds when you plant; I spray the existing turf with glyphosate if necessary before planting. Once the grass and weeds have died down, I plant straight into the ground, usually through the dead grass. After planting I pile on a mulch, or alternatively black polythene is a cheap weed suppressant.

I don't believe in digging massive trenches and piling in manure. Instead I add any nutrients or soil improvers to the surface if it is very poor soil, but only as the hedge gets going. Research has proven that it is water in the early years that is the limiting factor, not nutrients, and you want to encourage the roots to spread out into the surrounding soil; artificially improving the trench inhibits this. Poor drainage can result in failure, so it's worth considering planting on a mound or draining the area. For heavily consolidated sites you can have the soil aerated with a Terralift machine from Terrain Aeration (terrainaeration.co.uk), which works extremely well.

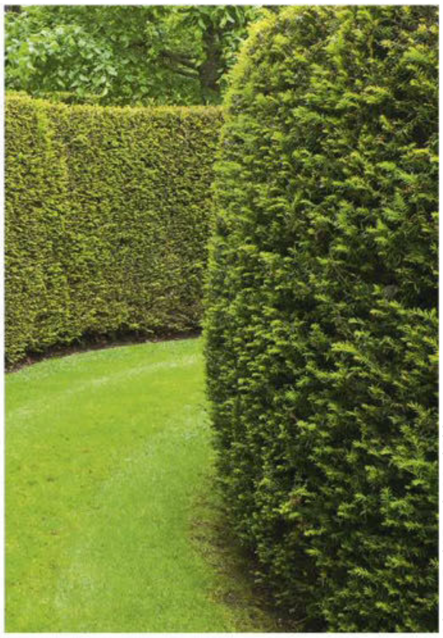
For a tall, fast-growing evergreen screen I would rarely, if ever, suggest a coniferous hedge. These beasts get wider and fatter every year, and their broadening girth will consume light and space. You can only cut these back so far without exposing old wood, which for conifers (with the exception of yew) won't bring forth new wood, and the frequent cutting to keep them respectable is laborious.

Better options are *Choisya ternata* (see right), which grows rapidly and forms a flowering hedge above eye level in four years or so. *Prunus lusitanica* 'Myrtifolia' (far right) is also fast growing. But I would not discount yew. With watering it grows faster than imagined. But you need to clip well. Clip all round the individual plants in the early years (but not the top until about 30cm from the desired height) and they will thicken fast.

Yew, or any other hedge, does not have to be formal. A cloud-pruned hedge with wavy undulations and bulbous sides, such as the Elephant Hedge at Rockingham Castle, has a more lively, friendly feel. You can sculpt most hedges to create waves, serpentines and form cut outs or windows – whatever you fancy – turning any hedge into a star performer rather that just a member of the supporting cast. □

• Bunny's recommendations for hedging plants continue over the next six pages.

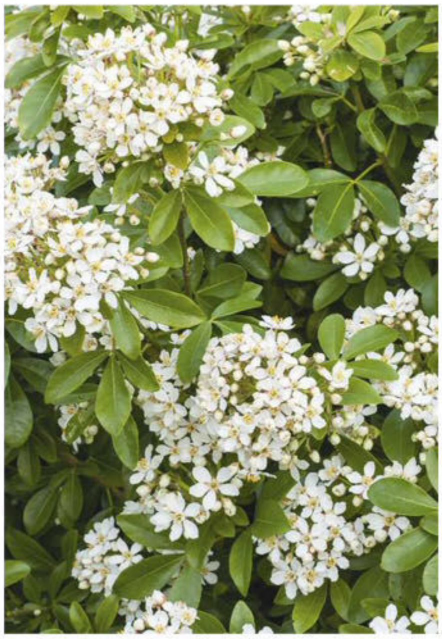
Evergreen hedges



ROB WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS

Taxus baccata

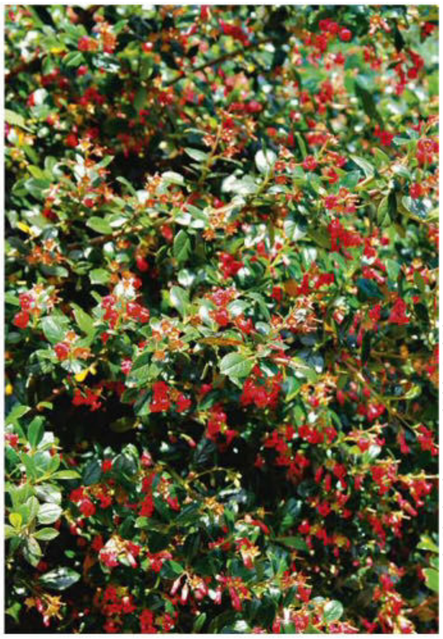
Our native English yew is my favourite hedge. The dark foliage is tight and generally needs clipping just once a year. Can be kept small or grown to 10m plus. Most soils, but not very wet. 20m. RHS H6, USDA 5b-8b†.



JULIETTE WADE / GAP PHOTOS

Choisya ternata

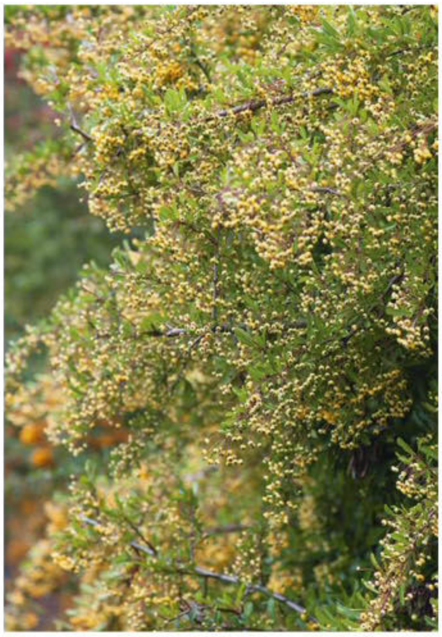
Quickly forms an informal flowering hedge with shiny leaves and white, sweetly scented flowers in late spring and early summer. Will tolerate sun or shade and most soils. 3m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 7a-9b.



MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Escallonia macrantha

A glossy, evergreen shrub that grows quickly to create an informal hedge. Rosy crimson flowers appear in June and flower through to early autumn. Suitable for all soils and good for coastal areas. 4m. USDA 8a-9b.



JOHN MARTIN / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

Pyracantha rogersiana 'Flava'

This prickly hedge can be a useful deterrent on vulnerable boundaries. It's fast growing and tolerates most soils in shade or sun. White flowers in summer are followed by red or orange berries. 4m. RHS H6, USDA 7a-10a.

ZENA ELEA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

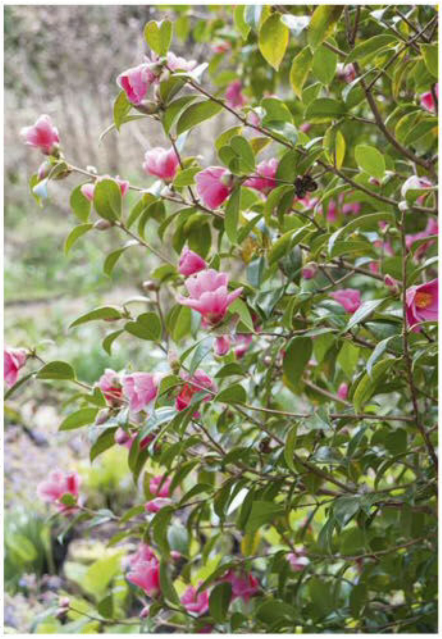
Ilex aquifolium
Holly can be difficult to establish, but it's worth persevering as it tolerates pollution and exposed areas, including extreme winds, and provides both food and shelter for wildlife. 5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b.

LEE AVISON / GAP PHOTOS

Quercus ilex
Holm or evergreen oak forms an excellent tall and dense screen. Fast growing, it tolerates extreme winds, sun and shade and thrives in any well-drained soil in all but the coldest areas. 10m-plus. RHS H5, USDA 7a-11.

THOMAS ALAMY / GAP PHOTOS

Elaeagnus x ebbingei
A fast-growing hedge that is particularly useful in windy and exposed sites. It will also tolerate all soils, except shallow chalk ones, and is also surprisingly good for pleaching. 3m-plus. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.

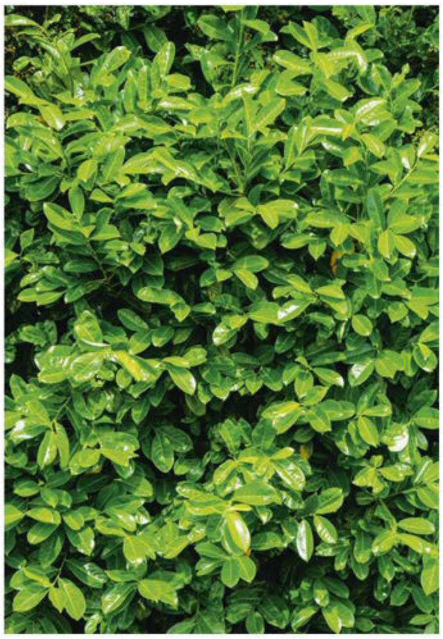


CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS

Camellia
These flowering beauties can be used to create an informal or formal hedge that is low or high depending on maintenance. They will tolerate sun or shade but require a lime-free soil. 3-5m. USDA 7a-10b.

FP / NOVA PHOTO GRAPHIK / THE GARDEN COLLECTION

***Prunus lusitanica* 'Myrtifolia'**
A cultivar that forms a brilliant, shiny leaved hedge with a smaller, darker green leaf than the species. Fast growing even in very dry soils and exposed conditions. 10m-plus. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.



JAYE THOMPSON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Prunus laurocerasus
Laurel is fast growing with large, bright green leaves. Has a wide, spreading, open habit so often becomes unkempt. Tolerates most soils (except shallow chalk), shade, sun and drought. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

Cutting and maintaining

- Once your hedge comes of age, there is a temptation to let it grow higher and wider. But before it gets too big, remember that it is far easier to cut a hedge if you are standing at ground level than if you are atop a platform or ladder, so it may be practical to restrict its height to 1.8m. Platforms are an option, but I find the lightweight Japanese ladders, such as those from niwaki.com, easier and cheaper.

- You may well need to cut into the bare wood of the sides (doing one side each year) to restrict its width too. If you have long stretches on a driveway getting a contractor with a tractor-mounted flail is a speedier option than cutting by hand. Although flails have a bad press, I find they can do a great job if operated well. You will find the hedge responds with denser, uniform leaf growth after a few years. The flail chops up all the twigs and leaves so negates the need for clearing up.

- Cordless hedge cutters make maintenance far easier and much quicker. Most professionals agree mechanical cutters produce a far better finish than hand shears, although corners and tricky bits will need a final check with shears to remove odd sprigs.

- Give some thought to the hedge profile you prefer. With a young hedge of any type, cutting it so its profile has an 'A' shape for its early years will allow light to penetrate the base and thicken it up. The eventual profile could be A-shaped, round topped or flat topped with a little chamfer on each side just below the top.

- Make sure mechanical hedge cutters are sharpened at least once a year by someone who takes the blades apart and sharpens each side individually.

- Never cut box when it's wet or rain is forecast. Water helps blight spores to spread; they abort in dry weather.

Evergreen hedges (continued)

GEOFF KIDD / GAP PHOTOS

Euonymus japonicus
This relatively fast-growing shrub with shiny dark green leaves, is extremely useful for coastal and windy sites. It will tolerate drought, and almost all soils, provided they're not wet. 3m-plus. USDA 6b-11.

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHERS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Hedera helix
Ivy grown on wires or on a frame produces a useful, narrow screen. It's fast growing and will tolerate many soils and conditions. The flowers, in early winter, provide food for insects. 10m-plus. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

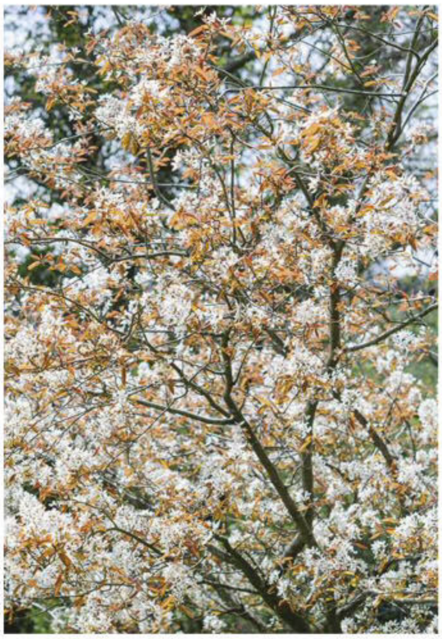
JOANNA KOSSAK / GAP PHOTOS

Myrtus communis
A superb hedge with shiny, dense foliage and white, fragrant flowers, which arrive in June and stay for months. Happy in full sun or partial shade, although good drainage is essential. 3m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 8b-11.

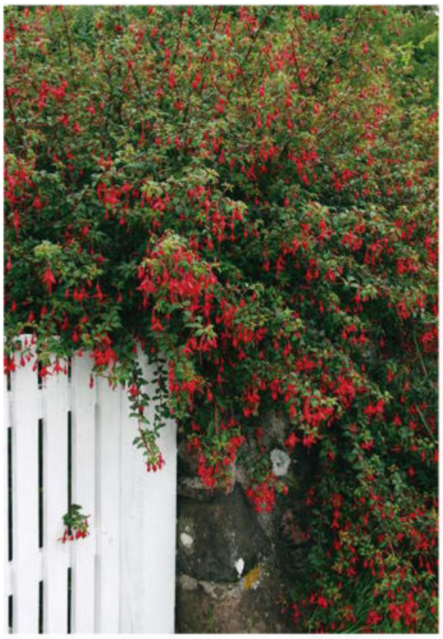
CHARLES HAWES / GAP PHOTOS

Phillyrea latifolia
Has lustrous dark green leaves and is best clipped into rounded shapes. Far hardier than is often assumed and grows well in containers. Tolerates both shade and sun but prefers well-drained soil. 10m-plus. USDA 7b-9a.

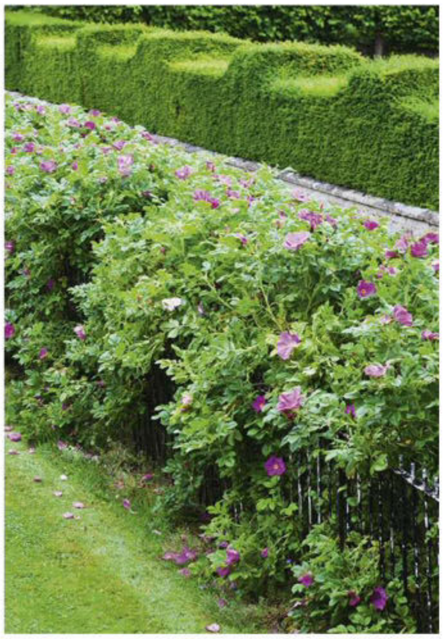
Flowering deciduous hedges


JASON INGRAM

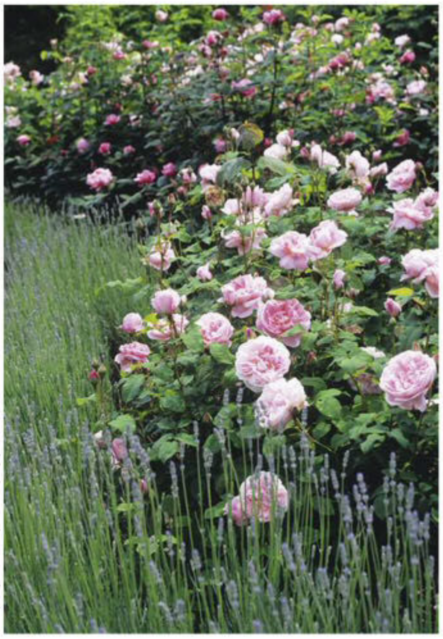
Amelanchier lamarckii
A stunning spring-flowering tree with foliage that goes from coppery red in spring through mid green to fiery red in autumn. Will tolerate sun or part shade, but is not good on alkaline or dry soils. 5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-10a.


ASPERRA GARDEN DESIGN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

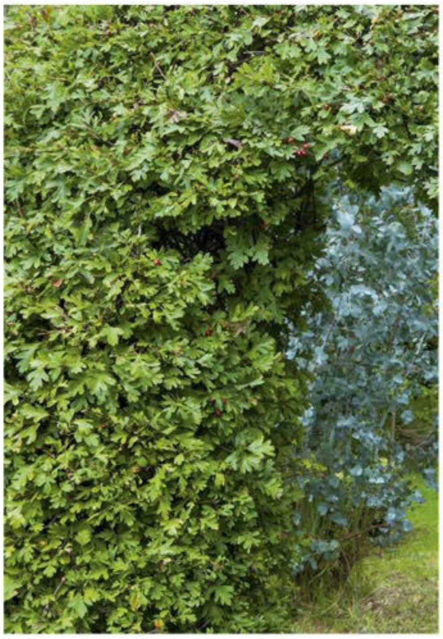
Fuchsia magellanica
A deciduous shrub with an informal rounded, habit, Best in moist, well-drained soils. It is highly prolific in Ireland, where its red flowers are a common sight in summer. 3m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.


CHARLES HAWES / GAP PHOTOS

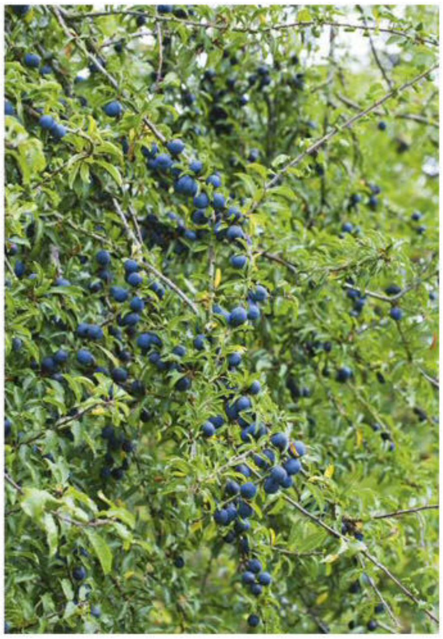
Rosa rugosa
A tough shrub with fragrant flowers from June to August followed by large orange hips. It forms an informal, suckering deciduous hedge. Tolerates many soils and wind, sun/semi-shade. 1.2m-plus. USDA 2a-8b.


LEIGH CLAPP / GAP PHOTOS

Rosa
Many cultivars, especially tough, repeat-flowering ones, such as *R.* The Mayflower (= 'Austilly'), form excellent informal hedges. Feeding and regular pruning will result in more blooms. 50cm-1.3m. USDA 3a-9b.


MARIANNE MAJERUS / MMGI

Crataegus monogyna
Hawthorn, as its name suggests, is possibly the best stock-proof fence. Tough and fast growing, it has white flowers in May followed by red berries. Happy in many soils, sun or partial shade. 8m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.


MARK BOLTON / GAP PHOTOS

Prunus spinosa
A suckering, spiny, informal hedge that has white flowers in March and April, followed by blue-black sloes in autumn. Tough and fast growing, it tolerates many soils and conditions. 5m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

Where to buy

- **David Austin Roses**
  Bowling Green Lane, Albrighton,
  Wolverhampton WV7 3HB.
  Tel 01902 376334,
  davidaustinroses.co.uk
- **Double Yew Nurseries**
  Northorpe Fen Farm, Bourne,
  Lincolnshire PE10 0DR.
  Tel 01778 424181,
  doubleyewnurseries.co.uk
- **Elveden**
  London Road, Elveden, Thetford,
  Suffolk IP24 3TQ.
  Tel 01842 890223, elveden.com
- **Majestic Trees**
  Chequers Meadow, Chequers Hill,
  Flamstead, nr St Albans,
  Hertfordshire AL3 8ET.
  Tel 01582 843881,
  majestictrees.co.uk
- **ReadyHedge**
  Court Gate Nursery, Station
  Road, Eckington, Pershore,
  Worcestershire WR10 3BB.
  Tel 01386 750585,
  readyhedgeltd.com

Where to see

- **Le Jardin Plume**
  790 Rue de la Plaine, 76116
  Auzouville-sur-Ry, France.
  Tel +33 (0)2 35 23 00 01,
  lejardinplume.com
- **Rockingham Castle**
  Rockingham, Market Harborough,
  Leicestershire LE16 8TH.
  rockinghamcastle.com
- **Sparsholt College**
  Westley Lane, Sparsholt,
  Hampshire SO21 2NF.
  sparsholt.ac.uk
  Offers courses in hedgelaying and features a display area of more than 40 different hedges.

Correction

In our January plant profile of cold climate plants [issue 230, page 50] we mistakenly captioned an image of *Viburnum farreri* as *Exochorda* x *macrantha* 'The Bride', and an image of *Exochorda* x *macrantha* 'The Bride' as *Viburnum farreri*. We apologise for this error.

Low hedges below 1m

RON EVANS / GAP PHOTOS

Buxus sempervirens
This evergreen, dense hedge is still popular despite box blight. You can reduce its susceptibility by planting on free-draining soil in dryer areas. Commercial chemicals can also help. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

MAP / ARNAUD DESCAT / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

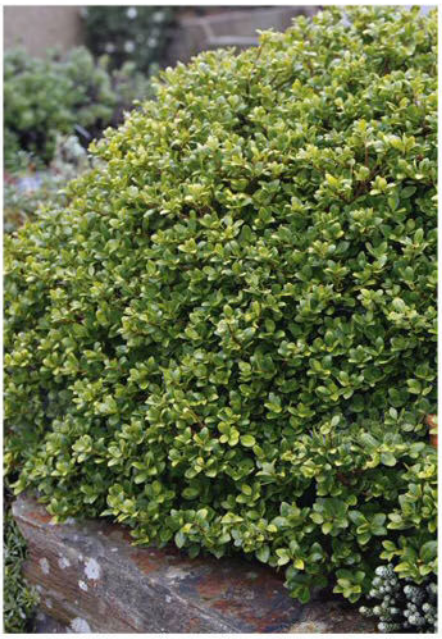
***Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa'**
This compact box is ideal for edging but more susceptible to blight than the straight species and can be slow growing. Avoid wet soils, overhead irrigation and cutting when wet. 1.5m. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

JAN SMITH / GAP PHOTOS

***Paeonia lactiflora* hybrids**
Peonies peak in May and June to form an attractive low hedge, although it will die down in autumn. Best in rich, heavy soils though good drainage is essential. Prefers shelter and most prefer sun. 40cm. USDA 2a-8b.

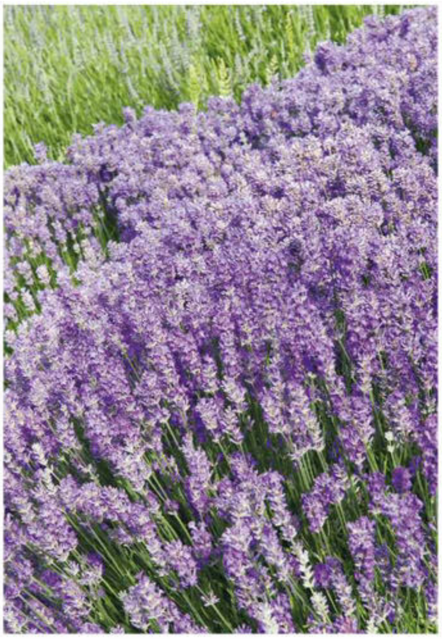
JO WHITWORTH / GAP PHOTOS

Teucrium* x *lucidrys
This evergreen shrub has been used to replace box at Highgrove. In summer, pinky flowers complement the dark, shiny leaves. Prefers well-drained soils, sun or part shade. 30cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.



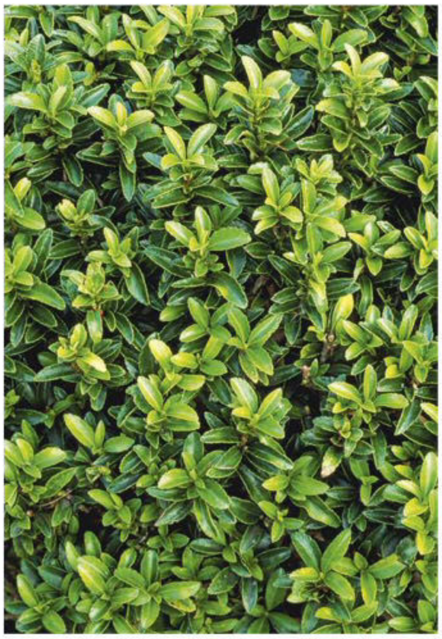
REX MAY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Ilex crenata
Often cited as box substitute, this shrub has a variable habit from upright to branched and can be hard to establish. Likes well-drained, acid soils and sun but will tolerate some shade. 3m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-6b.



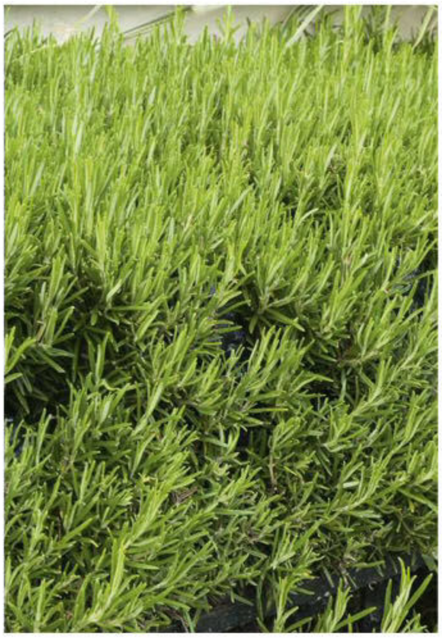
RITA COATES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

Lavandula
Many lavenders form excellent, colourful and fragrant low hedges, but sharp drainage is key for success. Best cut routinely in early August (just beyond the old wood). Prefers sun. 30cm-1m. USDA 5a-9b.



GEOFF KIDD / GAP PHOTOS

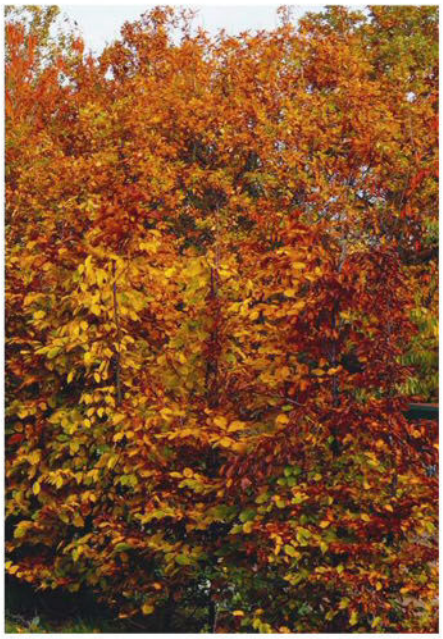
***Euonymus japonicus* 'Microphyllus'**
With small, polished, dark-green leaves that are very similar to box, this is another shrub that makes a good box substitute. It is happy in all soils except wet ones and is also tolerant of salt. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-11.



BENNET SMITH / MMGI

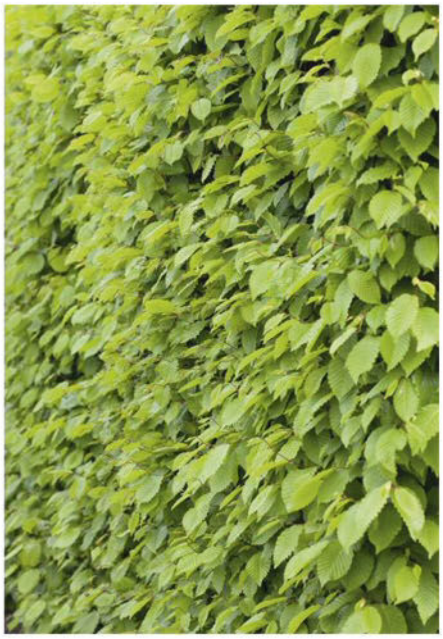
Rosmarinus officinalis
Rosemary forms a lovely billowing and fragrant, informal hedge. Evergreen with blue flowers from autumn to spring. It likes a free-draining soil and sun but will tolerate part shade. Deer resistant. 1m. USDA 7a-10b.

Deciduous hedges



BRIAN HOFFMAN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Fagus sylvatica
Superb formal hedge that holds its russet-coloured leaves all winter when used as hedging. Can be slow to establish, and prefers calcareous soils and good drainage. 10m-plus. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.



TOMMY TONSBERG / GAP PHOTOS

Carpinus betulus
A fabulous formal hedge that's fast and easy to grow. Tolerates most soils, sun and shade, and exposed sites. Has good yellow autumn colour and holds brown leaves in winter. 10m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Val Bourne

The one-time teacher and life-long organic gardening champion reflects on her passion for writing, her love of family and the lessons her grandmother taught her

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Even a stinker of a cold can't dampen Val Bourne's exuberance. Fortified by Lemsip and her unstoppable enthusiasm, she is rushing me around her Cotswold garden, showing me her favourite plants and pressing into my hand seed of a plant I've admired. Val is a garden writer, lecturer and plant collector who, for the past 20 years, has been enthusing gardeners about the best plants to grow and how to grow them.

Val's parents were in the film industry and she grew up in west London in what she describes as a "bohemian" childhood. "The reason I started gardening was because as a small child I had masses of energy and my grandmother used to take me into the garden to stop me waking everybody up," she says. "When I was seven years old, she was 77 and so I started doing the garden jobs she couldn't manage. I was splitting plants, sowing seeds. The love of plants I had then has never left me."

After training as a teacher Val went to work at Wellsbourne, the National Vegetable Research Station [now part of the University of Warwick]. "I had five very happy years there and learned a lot," she says. Val married and returned to teaching, bringing up a family and gardening. "I always gardened, always been self-sufficient in vegetables. I am a great family person, two daughters and four grandchildren and I am besotted with by family. My whole life is gardening and family."

Val started her career as a writer in the 1990s in frustration at the quality of much of the gardening press. She considers that she was lucky to have a good, "gloriously happy" grammar school education that nurtured a love of language, books and poetry. "I was very inspired by reading Beth Chatto's plant catalogue and her wonderful descriptions of plants. She injected such a magic into plants but most garden writing at the time was of the practical 'dig a hole and plonk it in' school". One day a friend, listening to another of Val's fulminations on the state of garden writing told her, if she was so clever, to have a go herself.

"So I did," says a spirited Val. "I sat down and wrote 20 articles and would send them off in great brown envelopes and they would then come back in great brown envelopes the next day." Val persevered, holding on to the advice of her friend, the photographer Clive Nichols, that "'No' just means 'Not yet'." Then, one day, David Hurrion at *The Gardener* magazine published one of her articles. "It was September 1995. A very important date for me. I remember the excitement so well."

Her familiarity with plants and lively writing style meant that almost immediately offers of more writing work arrived. Today Val is part of the gardening establishment, writing knowledgeably about plants and gardens, lecturing to gardening societies and assessing plants for the RHS. "I am a dedicated freelance writer. I write most days," she says. "And when I am not writing I am lecturing or gardening. I love nothing more than going into the garden and poking about to see what is happening."

Val has always gardened organically, something she ascribes to having started gardening with her grandmother. "She was born in 1881 and was not aware of chemicals. I have never known anything other than organic gardening. I was introduced to chemicals at Wellsbourne and that convinced me that I never wanted to use them at home and that no one should be using them in their garden." She is a fervent champion of organic gardening.

"In my youth, with blonde hair and wearing a miniskirt, people would think that I was a bit of a bimbo, but I am, and always have been, a very serious person and I do worry about the future of the planet," she says. "I have noticed a huge decline in insect life, wild flowers, bird life even in the past 20 years. I think that gardens are terrifically important in stopping that decline. We have to stop using chemicals. They are unnecessary." At the start of her career Val was often ridiculed for her organic approach. "I've had head gardeners say to me that it is impossible to garden without spraying but that is just ridiculous."

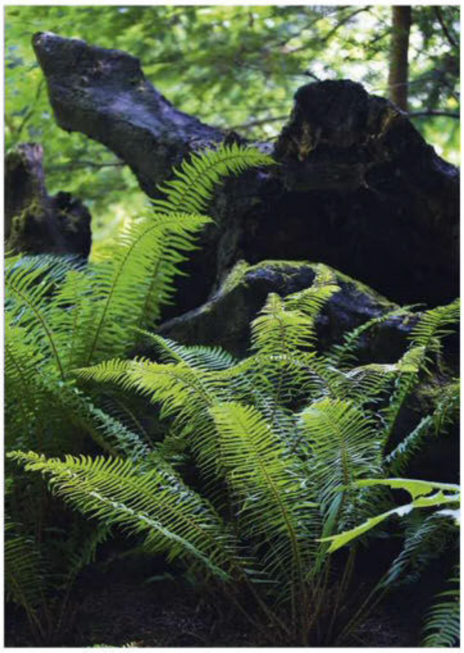
A decade ago Val wrote a book, *The Natural Gardener*, to show people how to garden organically. She has since written several more on growing flowers, fruit and veg and is currently working on a new book that focuses on the intricate network of relationships in the garden. "There is a whole world, an infrastructure, little happenings that go on in your garden that control everything for you," she says. "The natural world underpins everything. We can't afford to lose a single species. Were we to lose it, we could never make another song thrush." If Val's tenacity and energy have anything to do with it, nothing is going to be lost on her watch. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Look out for Val's plant profile on trilliums in the March issue of *Gardens Illustrated*. You can see more of Val's features and read her gardening blog at valbourne.co.uk

NEXT MONTH Garden writer Katherine Swift.

> *"The natural world underpins everything. We can't afford to lose a single species. Were we to lose it, we could never make another song thrush"*

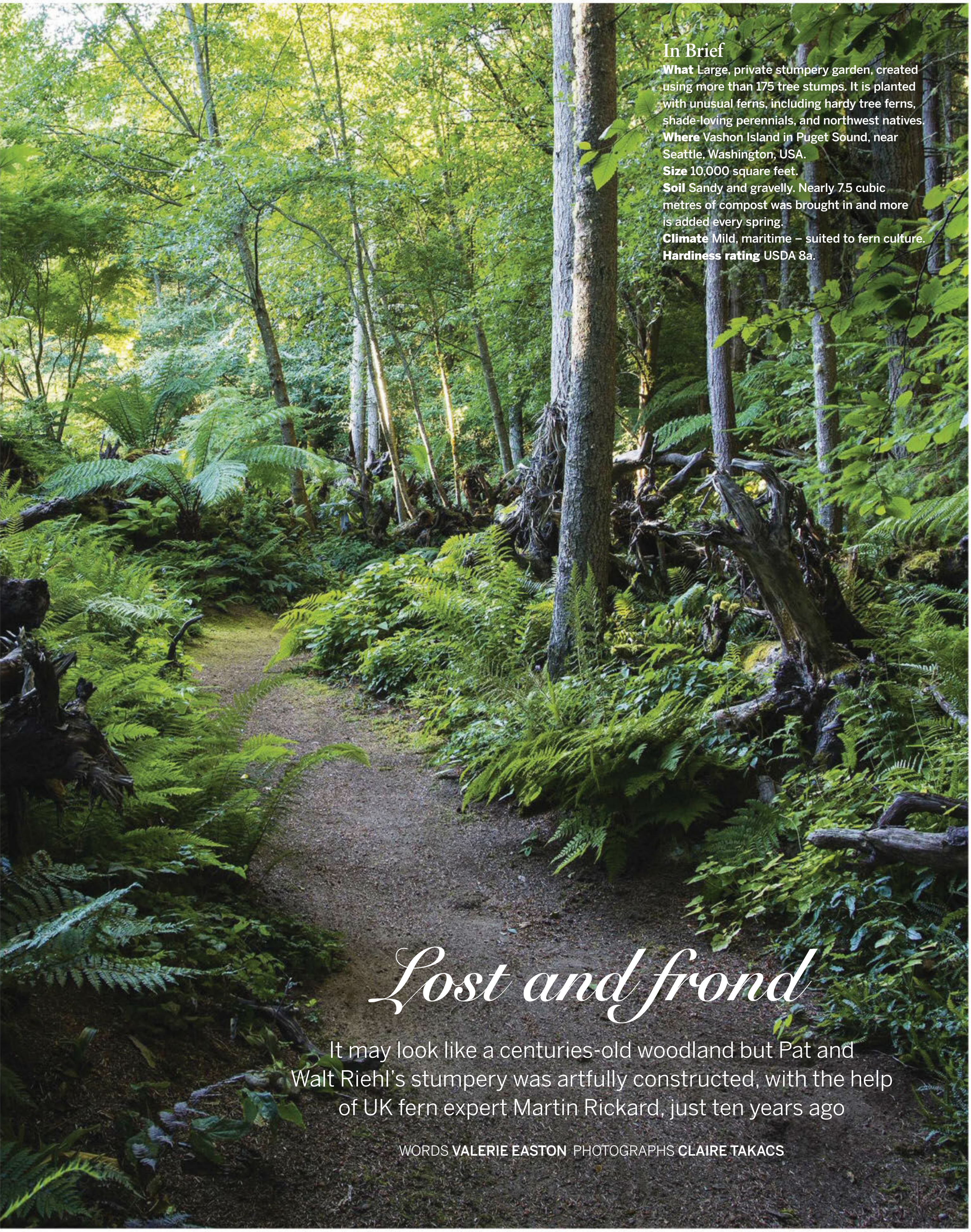


This image Fern expert Martin Rickard designed the main path, flanked by conifer trunks, stumps, ferns and moss, to curve away out of sight.

Left from top
Owner Pat Riehl's favourite spot is deep in the ravine where she can look up through the fronds of *Dicksonia antarctica*.

One of Pat's textural green-on-green combinations – northwest native salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) grows up through a deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*).

The tall, evergreen fronds of native sword ferns (*Polystichum munitum*) play off the rugged shape of a blackened stump salvaged from a fire.



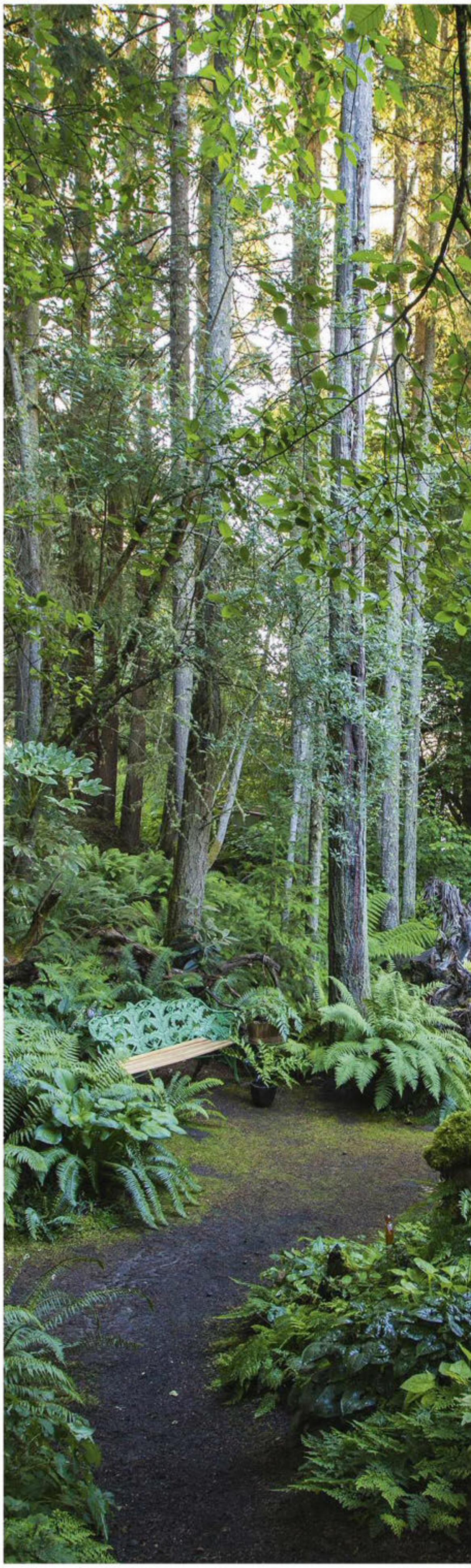
In Brief

What Large, private stumpery garden, created using more than 175 tree stumps. It is planted with unusual ferns, including hardy tree ferns, shade-loving perennials, and northwest natives.
Where Vashon Island in Puget Sound, near Seattle, Washington, USA.
Size 10,000 square feet.
Soil Sandy and gravelly. Nearly 7.5 cubic metres of compost was brought in and more is added every spring.
Climate Mild, maritime – suited to fern culture.
Hardiness rating USDA 8a.

Lost and frond

It may look like a centuries-old woodland but Pat and Walt Riehl's stumpery was artfully constructed, with the help of UK fern expert Martin Rickard, just ten years ago

WORDS **VALERIE EASTON** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**



On an island in Puget Sound, in the far northwest corner of the USA, is one of the world's largest stumperies, created as part of a private garden. Fern expert Martin Rickard helped owners Pat and Walt Riehl design and plant their 10,000 square foot stumpery on Vashon Island, a short ferry ride west from Seattle.

Martin believes the Riehls' stumpery to be similar in size to the one HRH Prince Charles built at Highgrove, a creation credited with bringing these Victorian-era gardens back into vogue. Pat and Walt's stumpery, built with more than 175 native cedar stumps scavenged from construction sites, fits snugly into a ravine beneath a canopy of native trees. As the stumps settle into their slow decomposition, the shady grotto of a garden teems with shrews, frogs, insects and birds of every description (the drumming of busy woodpeckers echoes through the canopy).

"As soon as I saw the ravine I knew it should be a stumpery," says Pat. "I've visited Highgrove a couple of times, and was inspired by it, but wanted to make a very different kind of stumpery." The topography of her property is ideal; while Highgrove is mostly flat, the Riehls' garden falls sharply away from the house into a long, deep gully.

When the Riehls bought the place in 2006, the ravine was so overgrown with brambles and stinging nettles they could only guess at its shape and depth. They followed a deer path down the slope to start clearing out ▷

This image A replica of the 'Fern and Blackberry' bench, originally created by the Coalbrookdale foundry in around 1858, offers a place to linger along the main trail. The path leads past tree ferns and moss-coated stumps in a forest scene that looks naturalistic but has been skillfully constructed.

Left Silvery-toned painted ferns (*Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum* 'Burgundy Lace') and shield ferns (*Polystichum setiferum* 'Pulcherrimum Bevis') lead to the stumpery entrance.

As the stumps settle into their slow decomposition, the shady grotto of a garden teems with shrews, frogs, insects and birds of every description

Stumperies to visit

IN THE USA

The Victorian Stumpery at the **Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden** in Federal Way, Washington, is one of the largest public stumperies, with more than 140 stumps and logs. rhodygarden.org

IN THE UK

The stumpery at **Biddulph Grange,** in Staffordshire, dates back to the Victorian age. Built in the 1850s, it's considered to be the first stumpery ever created. nationaltrust.org.uk

Burnby Hall Gardens, in Yorkshire, has a relatively new stumpery inspired by Highgrove. burnbyhallgardens.com

HRH Prince Charles's garden at **Highgrove,** in Gloucestershire, has the largest stumpery in Britain. Designed by Julian and Isabel Bannerman, it employs roots of sweet chestnut and scaffolding to support plantings of hellebores, hostas and ferns. highgrovegardens.com

Ickworth Stumpery, in Suffolk, is part of a larger, Italianate-style garden. The grotto-like stumpery, originally built in the 19th century, was recently extended. nationaltrust.org.uk

History of the stumpery

The first stumpery was built by artist and gardener Edward Cooke at Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire, around 1856. What could have inspired these grotto-like, roots-in-the-air gardens? Perhaps it was a combination of the Victorian fern craze and the era's love of gothic fairy tale that resulted in turning stumps upside down to plant among their roots. Or maybe it was more a practical matter of English soil not having enough large rocks on which to create fern gardens. Tree stumps were more plentiful and could support ferns and other shade-loving plants. Ferns thrive best in shady, moist soil, although they will tolerate some sun. You can improve moisture retention by incorporating organic matter, such as compost or leaf mould, to the soil.

The view towards the house reveals the contours of the ravine that originally inspired Pat.

▷ the thick undergrowth. Free of weeds and debris, the ravine looked like a bare scar in the landscape. But undeterred, and with her stumpery vision in mind, Pat continued her travels around the USA and to Europe and Japan to study ferns and visit stumperies.

Martin started work on the garden in 2007. He fell in love with northwest native sword ferns, and convinced Pat to use their strong, vertical lines throughout the garden. The scale of these plants suited a gardener like Pat, who thinks big. Her first order of ferns numbered more than 500, and she's since added to her collection. "We had to plant in masses, it was the only sane way to make a garden this large," she says.

"I love that there are no flowers, the garden is monochromatic and built around texture," she adds. The main theme is simply shades of green and brown: conifer trunks, roots, stumps, ferns and moss. "My other great love is epimediums," says Pat, who grows 150 types of this evergreen ground-cover plant.

Pat claims she's no designer. "I walk around, find a hole, and put a plant in it," she says. She credits Martin, who has visited Vashon three times to help with the stumpery, for the naturalistic flow of the garden. "Martin designed the main path to wind around the contours of the land, so it doesn't reveal everything at once," says Pat. The first focal point you see as you descend into the gully is a metal table planted in tiny ferns and little, precious ephemerals. Walt built the entry pergola, a metal armature beneath a pile-up of stumps so dense you'd never know there's a scaffold supporting the mysteriously dark tunnel. The spreading fronds of 16 tree ferns form a paler layer beneath the high canopy of native firs and cedars. *Podophyllum versipelle* 'Spotty Dotty' and the intensely textural upside-down fern (*Arachniodes standishii*) give reason to linger longer on the path. "Even familiar plants look different set against the burls and roots," says Pat, whose favourite spot is deep in the ravine where she can look up through gauzy fronds of the tree ferns.

After completing the main work of the stumpery, Pat came back up the slope to plant its margins. Giant Himalayan lilies (*Cardiocrinum giganteum*), drifts of native orchids and masses of hostas and hydrangeas create a harmonious transition between the more conventionally cultivated parts of the garden and the fern extravaganza in the gully.

Pat cares for the garden herself. "I'm a compulsive weeder," she says, which is a good thing because she's still dealing with persistent brambles and bracken fern. "Everyone gave me recipes for moss, but I just let it grow as it would," she says. Between the decomposing tree stumps and a soft blanketing of moss, the garden feels deeply green and pleasantly primeval. In early November, Pat carefully wraps the trunks of the *Dicksonia antarctica* and the *Dicksonia fibrosa* to protect them from rain and rot. "It's all been such a learning process," says Pat, who stops to pluck a weed here and pet a fern frond there as she navigates the shady pathways of her maturing garden. "Stumperies transport you to another place – it gives me such a feeling of serenity." □

9 of Pat Riehl's favourite ferns

1 *Blechnum penna-marina*
An evergreen ground cover with leathery fronds, used throughout the garden for its rosy pink new growth. 15cm. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b†.

2 *Pyrrosia lingua*
"I saw pyrrosias growing wild when I was in Japan," says Pat. This felt fern grows happily in a small amount of gritty soil on the surface of rocks or stumps. 30cm. USDA 7b-10b.

3 *Polystichum setiferum* 'Pulcherrimum Bevis'
A choice cultivar of the soft shield fern, these delicate evergreens look their best grouped together for impact. 40cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

4 *Polypodium vulgare* 'Elegantissimum'
"I was very lucky to bring this back from England with me," says Pat of this ruffled collector's fern. Martin Rickard has the UK National Collection of polypodiums. 30cm. USDA 5a-8b.

5 *Adiantum venustum*
The Himalayan maidenhair fern serves as evergreen ground cover, thriving in a hard winter without a whimper. 15-30cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

6 *Osmunda regalis*
The ancient royal fern is unusual because it holds its spores on the tips of the fronds. 2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 2a-10b.

7 *Dicksonia antarctica*
"I can't imagine the stumpery without these hardy tree ferns – they're in a league of their own," says Pat. 3-6m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.

8 *Dryopteris sieboldii*
This is evergreen, which is unusual for a wood fern. It's slow to get established but then it grows large and dramatic. 50cm. AGM. USDA 7a-10b.

9 *Asplenium trichomanes*
A fragile looking but tough small evergreen fern, the maidenhair spleenwort grows best in rocky soil or on stumps. 40cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 2a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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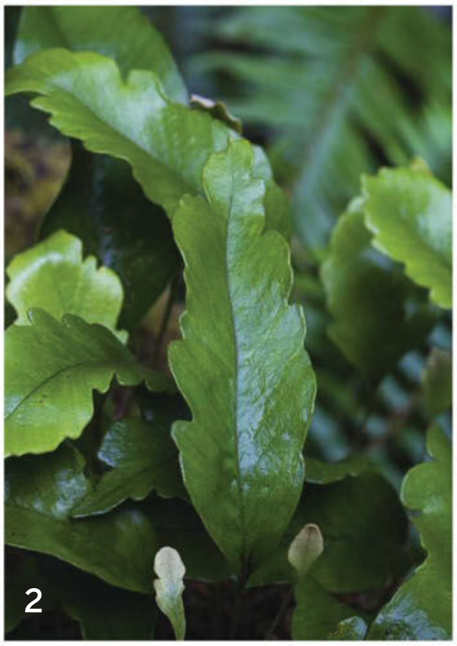
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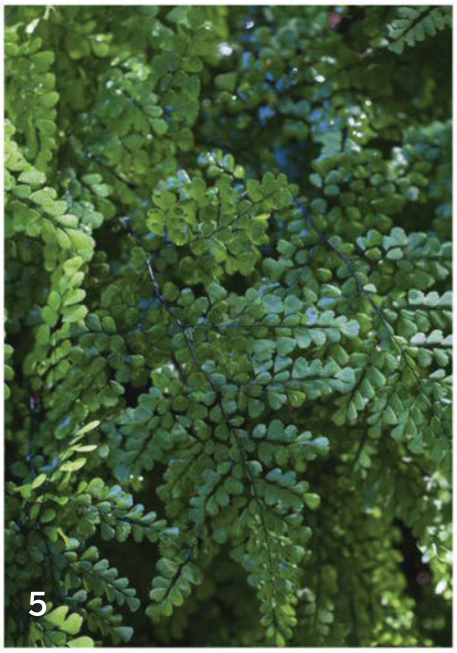
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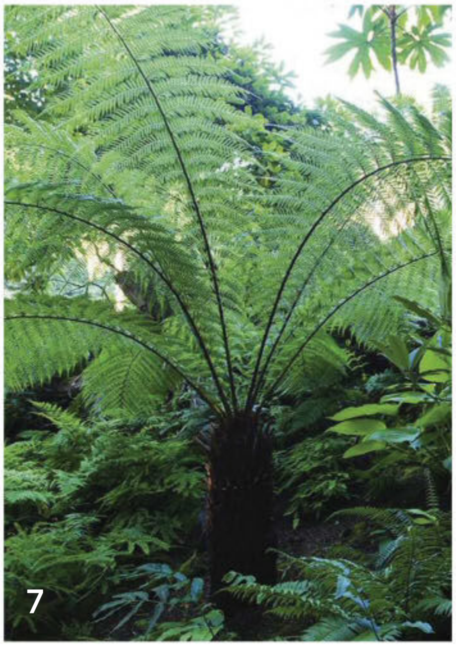
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6 FP / FOCUSONGARDEN / LUCKNER / THE GARDEN COLLECTION

On the wild side

For gardener John Sales, naturalising snowdrops is the key to creating beautiful displays that stay healthy for longer

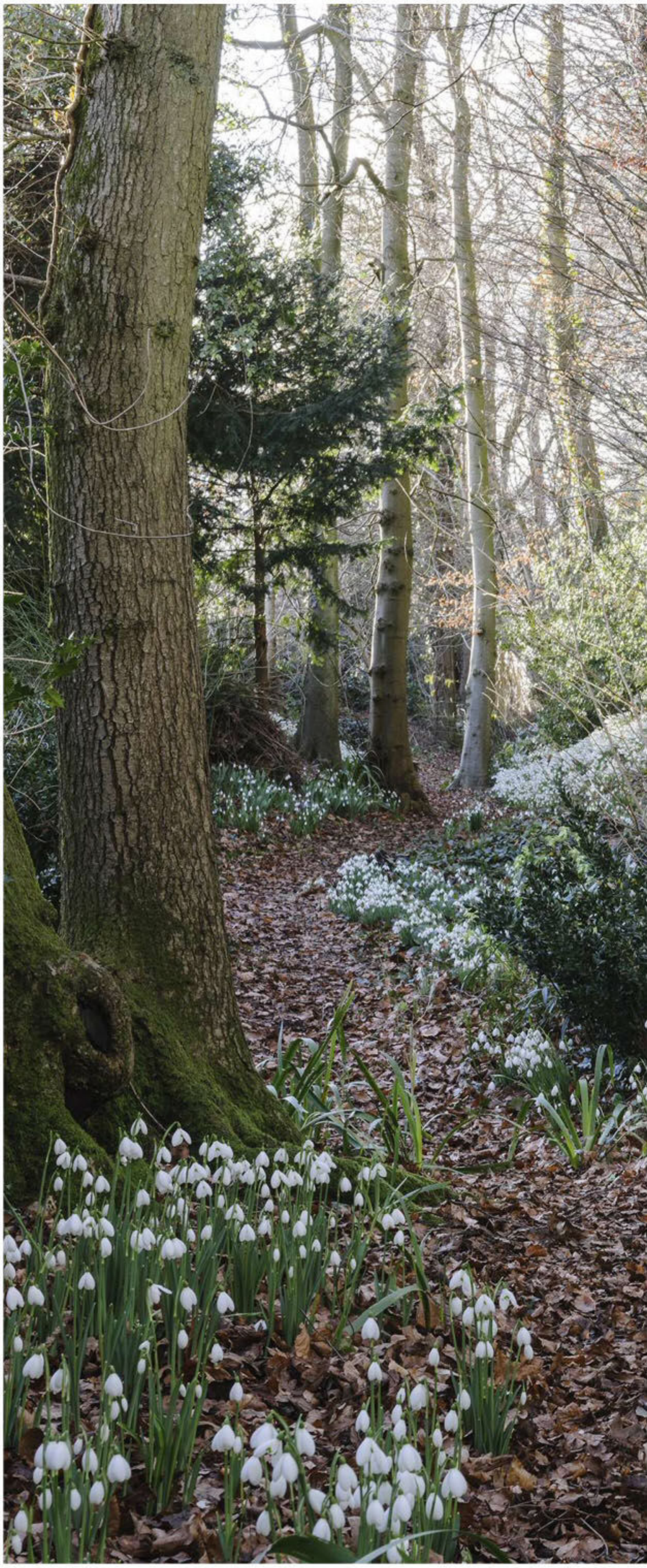
WORDS MARY KEEN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

John Sales, former chief gardens adviser for the National Trust, is anxious that his Cotswold garden should not be thought of as just a place for snowdrops. Because he is my neighbour, I can vouch for the fact that although galanthophile visitors clamour for a sight of his collection, those who know him want to see what is going on in his garden throughout the year. His shady woodland with irises in the grass, his special meadows studded with orchids, his borders, his slim box hedges, well-grown veg and unusual plants are all managed with the same high spirits and humour that earned him so many fans in his NT days. He likes the garden to be satisfying all year and snowdrops, he says, come in at a useful time, adding, "I am not a collector."

John and his wife Lyn have lived at their present house for 31 years. When they moved here, snowdrops were thought of as background plants for the wild, and they inherited a few late-flowering *Galanthus nivalis*, as well as a few doubles. At the time, galanthomania was only a glint in the eye of a very few growers. John remembers the first of many snowdrop lunches with Mary Biddulph at Rodmarton Manor in the 1970s. "It was a white out," he says, "but we struggled round." He recalls that Elizabeth Strangman had a very exciting bulb, named after her nursery, 'Washfield Colesbourne'. But it was when his work took him to Anglesey Abbey that John began to be aware of the possibilities of huge variations in snowdrops. Masses of bulbs had been dumped in a ditch for years, but John suggested that head gardener Richard Ayres should pick out any that were distinct and plant them in the garden. Anglesey Abbey now has one of the best collections in the land.

You need to be observant to spot a good snowdrop. One of the first in the Sales's garden was an early form of *G.* 'Lyn' that Lyn found on a walk. The Cotswolds has always been an area where snowdrops do well and other local variants followed. John likes a plant with a provenance or a local connection and *G.* 'Daglingworth', named after a neighbouring village, is a particular favourite. He also likes to see great patches of naturalised snowdrops and is firm that snowdrops planted "heads down in the border" is not really his style.

In the Sales's garden there are currently more than 100 distinct forms of *Galanthus* growing happily in grass, and another 100 or so on shady woodland banks. John thinks the reason many snowdrops get diseased, is partly because in borders they share a rich diet with other plants, which they hate. He also thinks that old narcissi cultivars, such as the early Backhouse cultivars 'Empress' and 'Emperor', ▷



More than 100 distinct forms of snowdrop flourish on the banks of a sunken lane, which surrounds John and Lyn's patch of ancient woodland.

Some of John's best drifts are grown on a north-facing bank at the edge of his ancient woodland ditch. Others are happy in dappled shade from a mix of hazels and other small trees

In a corner of John and Lyn's garden *G. nivalis* and *G. nivalis* 'Anglesey Abbey' – found by the renowned horticulturist Graham Stuart Thomas at Anglesey Abbey – grow beneath a hazel matrix with a young Judas tree in the foreground.

▷ which are often grown with snowdrops in spring displays, were carriers of virus. Congested clumps are less likely when bulbs are grown naturally and he rarely divides his snowdrops unless they are in very tight clumps. "Putting them in grass stops disease," he says firmly.

I have copied this advice in my own garden and find snowdrops do seem happier grown out of flower beds than in them. For expensive cultivars, stock is built up from ones and twos and then planted in grass in random spots. No feeding, no mulching and good drainage are key. Shade and shelter also matter. Some of John's best drifts are grown on a north-facing bank at the edge of his ancient woodland ditch. Others are happy in dappled shade from a mix of hazels and other small trees including hollies and a young Judas tree. A big *Cotoneaster* x *watereri* is a standout feature. The hazels are coppiced on a six-year rotation, with half the plants cut to the ground every three years. The grass is mown and carted away as late as possible; ideally in September. On John's well-drained soil with well-behaved grasses this may be easier than for those on heavier soils with modern rye grass mixes.

The only advice I am reluctant to follow is the counsel of perfection also advanced by the great snowdrop buff Dr John Grimshaw. This is, that the best time to move or divide snowdrops is in June, when they are dormant. But when I say to John this is impossible, because by June you never know where the bulbs are and that anyway life in the garden is much too demanding by then, he just laughs and agrees. No wonder plants thrive in the relaxed and happy care of this friendly gardener. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Where to buy

- **Avon Bulbs**
  Burnt House Farm, Mid Lambrook, South Petherton,
  Somerset TA13 5HE.
  Tel 01460 242177, avonbulbs.co.uk
- **Snowdrop Company**
  Barn Cottage, Shilton, Oxfordshire OX18 4AB.
  Tel 01993 842177.

Where to see

- **Anglesey Abbey**
  Quy Road, Lode, Cambridge CB25 9EJ.
  Tel 01223 810080, nationaltrust.org.uk
- **Cotswold Farm**
  Duntisbourne Abbots, nr Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 7JS.
  Tel 01285 821857, cotswoldfarmgardens.org.uk
- **Rodmarton Manor**
  Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6PF.
  Tel 01285 841442, rodmarton-manor.co.uk
- **Welford Park**
  Welford, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8HU.
  Tel 01488 608691, welfordpark.co.uk

Turn the page for John's recommended snowdrops for naturalising

12 of John Sales's favourite snowdrops for naturalising

1 *Galanthus* 'Bess'
An early, easy and strong snowdrop with good green markings on the inner segments. 12cm.

2 *G.* 'Lyn'
John admires this for its early flowering and for the fact that his wife Lyn found this *G.* 'Atkinsii' variant locally. John is particularly attached to a plant with provenance. 20cm.

3 *G.* 'Richard Ayres'
A handsome, early flowering double form that is named after the head gardener at Anglesey Abbey, from where so many good snowdrops have originated. 30cm.

4 *G. nivalis* 'Anglesey Abbey'
Much loved by John for its provenance as well as for its broad, deep-green leaves and elegant flowers. Once known as *G. lagodechianus*, it is now firmly identified as an unusual variant of *G. nivalis*. Reproduces freely from seed. 12cm.

5 *G.* 'S Arnott'
Scented, elegant, easy to cultivate and long lived, if you grow only one snowdrop this should be it. 30cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b[†].

6 *G. nivalis*
Looks lovely everywhere, but especially in huge naturalised drifts. There are early and late-flowering versions of this beauty, which is best seen with the sun behind you. 10cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

7 *G.* 'Dionysus'
Arguably the best of the Greatorex doubles, early crosses (from *G. nivalis* f. *pleniflorus* 'Flore Pleno' and *G. plicatus*). Crossed in the 1960s by Heyrick Greatorex, an eccentric recluse, they were welcomed with much excitement. 14cm.

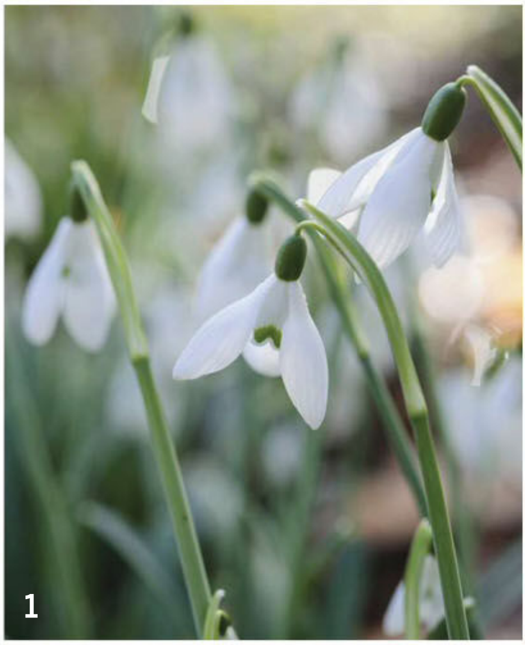
8 *G.* 'Daglingworth'
A beautiful bell-shaped, single snowdrop found in local woods by Ruth Birchall of Cotswold Farm. It seeds into large colonies and in the secret site, near Daglingworth, there are large patches under trees that have been there for years. 20cm.

9 *G.* 'Galatea'
A beautiful snowdrop, with a long pedicel (but less exaggerated than *G.* 'Magnet'), which increases easily. An old hybrid that dates from the end of the 19th century, it clumps up well and grows undisturbed in my garden at the back of summer flowers near a yew hedge. 25cm.

10 *G. elwesii* 'Mrs Macnamara'
One of the earliest snowdrops to flower, usually in January but sometimes before Christmas. This is a tall, graceful plant with narrow, blue-green leaves. It increases quickly into large colonies. 25-30cm. RHS H5.

11 *G. nivalis* from Prior Park
John identified this as distinct on a routine visit to the National Trust garden in Somerset. 12cm.

12 *G. woronowii*
John says these are hard to name precisely, as they can be confused with other snowdrops (*ikariae* and *platyphyllus* are often grouped under the same heading). *G. woronowii* comes from southern Russia and has glossy, broad-folded leaves in a bright green that are a handsome feature even without any flowers. 15cm. AGM. RHS H5.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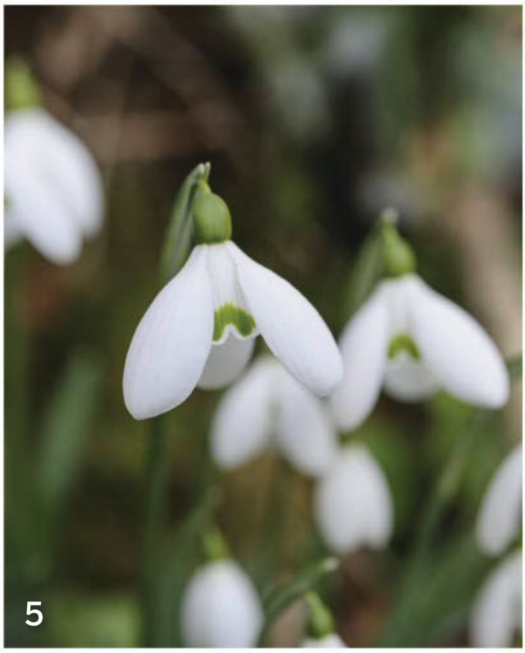
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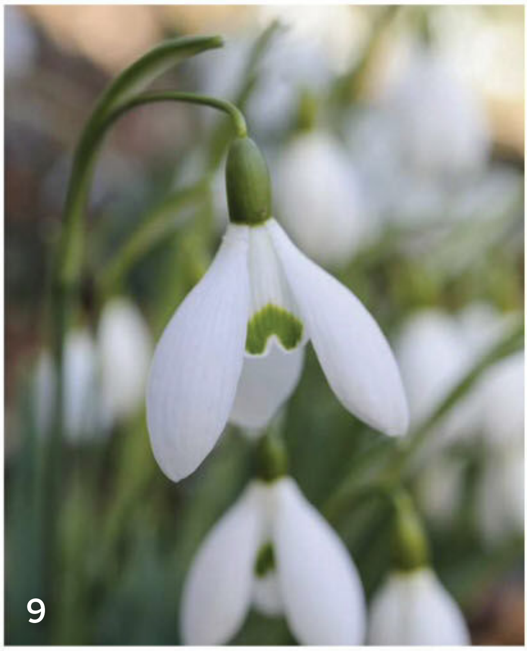
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3 & 10 CAROLE DRAKE, 8 MARK BOLTON ALL GAP PHOTOS

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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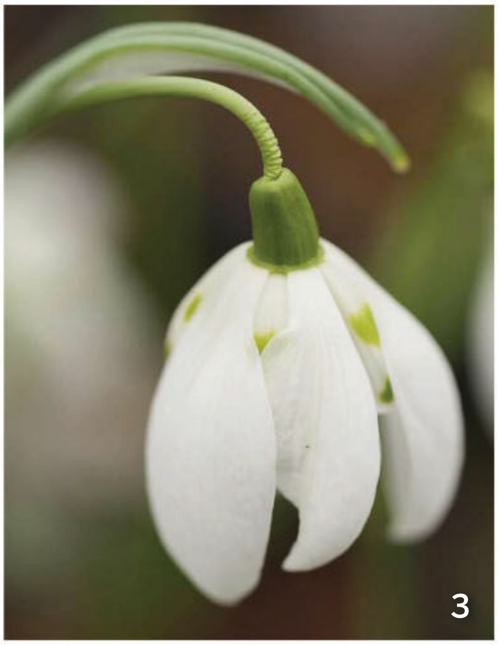

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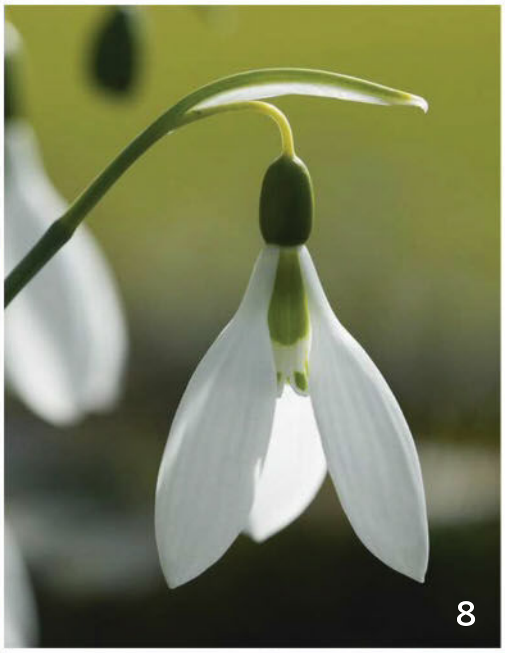

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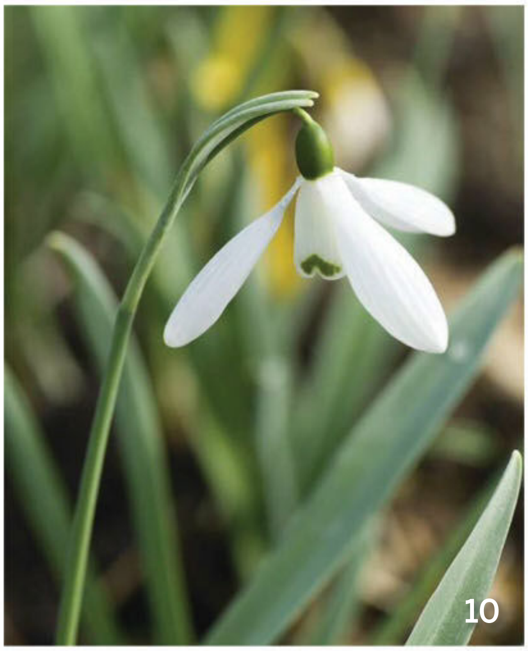

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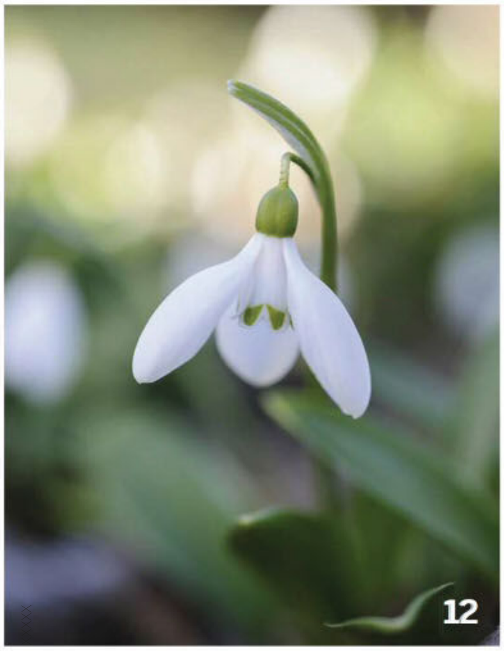

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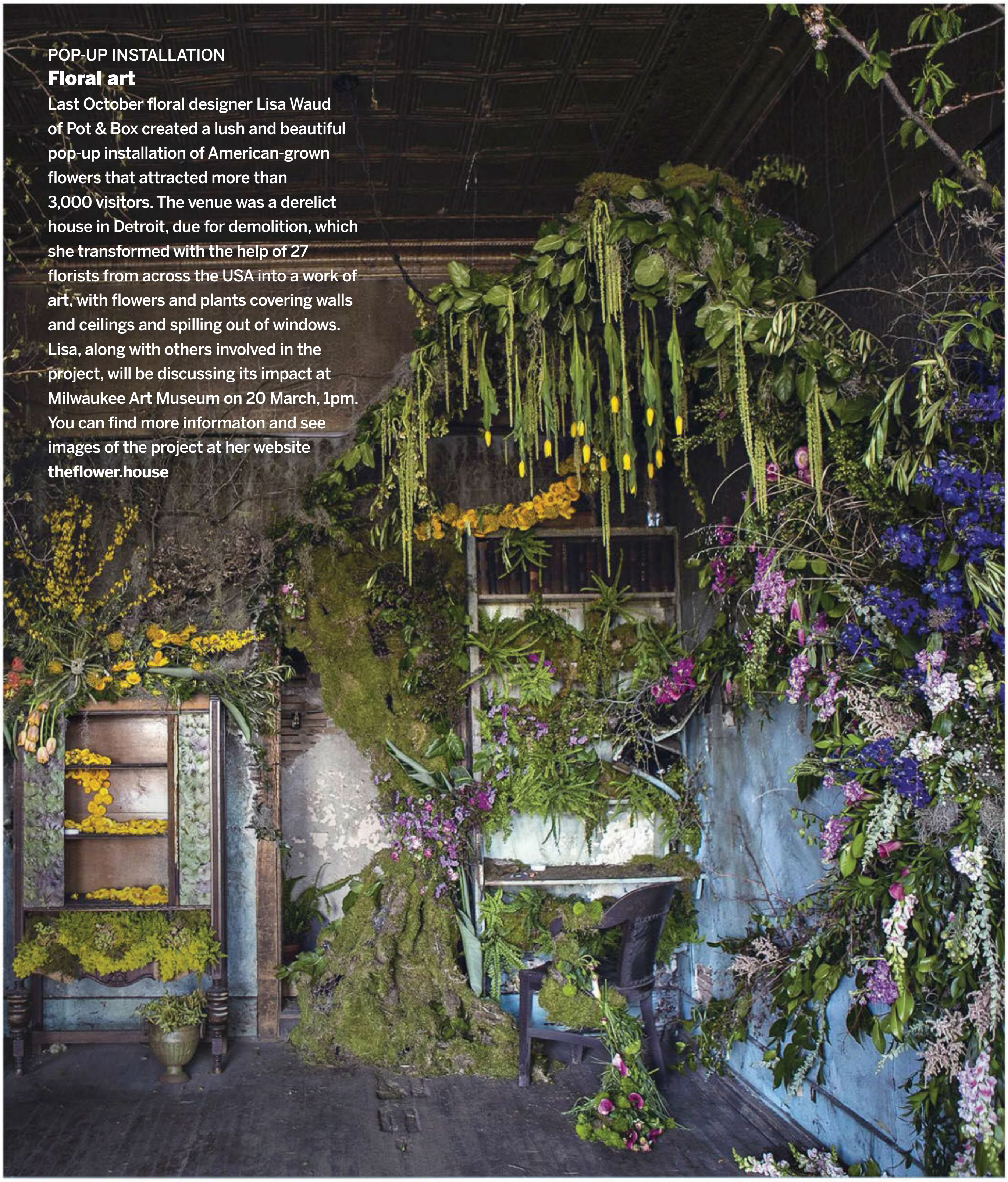
design

Design update, ideas and sourcebook

UPDATE COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



POP-UP INSTALLATION

Floral art

Last October floral designer Lisa Waud of Pot & Box created a lush and beautiful pop-up installation of American-grown flowers that attracted more than 3,000 visitors. The venue was a derelict house in Detroit, due for demolition, which she transformed with the help of 27 florists from across the USA into a work of art, with flowers and plants covering walls and ceilings and spilling out of windows. Lisa, along with others involved in the project, will be discussing its impact at Milwaukee Art Museum on 20 March, 1pm. You can find more informaton and see images of the project at her website **theflower.house**

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Point of new

Grassy pyramidal roofs give the renovated Biesbosch Museum on a man-made island in Werkendam, southern Netherlands, a striking geometric profile and help to blend the buildings into the surrounding landscape. A glass-fronted new wing provides exhibition space, a restaurant and a visitor centre while an elevated walkway offers views across the tidal land. **biesboschmuseumeiland.nl**

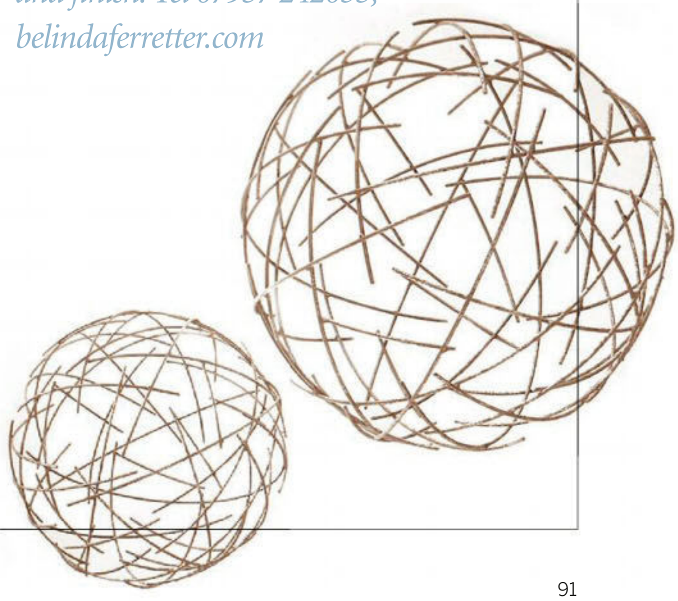
EXHIBITION

Light fantastic

The courtyard at the seafront Jerwood Gallery in Hastings has been illuminated this winter with a quirky stained-glass greenhouse created by artists Tony Heywood and Alison Condie. *The Gardener* is made out of pieces 18th- and 19th-century stained glass, which have been re-assembled to form images of fantastical creatures – part plant, part human, part insect – to represent an environment in which nature holds an elevated position. The exhibition continues until May, **jerwoodgallery.org**

ART IN THE ROUND

These elegant, airy steel spheres, reminiscent of seedheads, are by talented metalwork artist Belinda Ferretter. They can be left untreated, to develop a rich, rusted patina, or supplied in a range of powder-coated colours. From her studio in East Sussex, Belinda produces a wide range of largely bespoke metalwork, including gates, seats, bird tables and plant supports, much of it inspired by nature. Prices for the spheres start at £120, depending on size and finish. Tel 07957 242035; belindaferretter.com

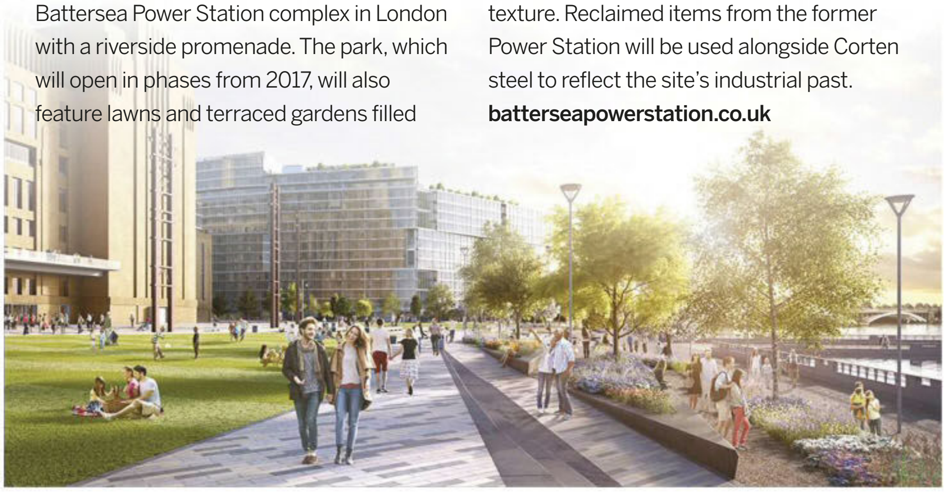


BIESBOSCH MUSEUM: RONALD TILLEMAN. JERWOOD GALLERY: SHELLEY GIBBON.

NEW PARK

Powering ahead

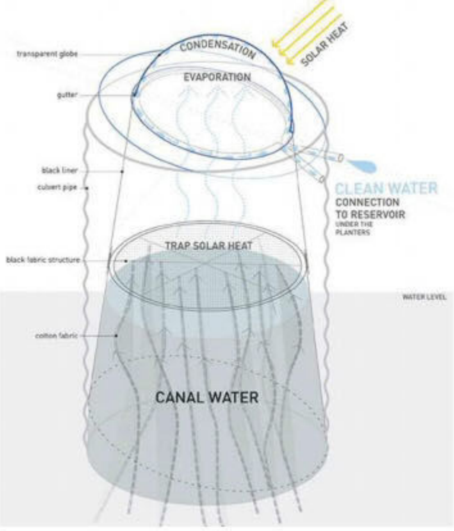
A six-acre public park, designed by LDA Design, will link the different areas of the new Battersea Power Station complex in London with a riverside promenade. The park, which will open in phases from 2017, will also feature lawns and terraced gardens filled with drifts of herbaceous plants and grasses, and specimen trees to provide structure and texture. Reclaimed items from the former Power Station will be used alongside Corten steel to reflect the site's industrial past. **batterseapowerstation.co.uk**

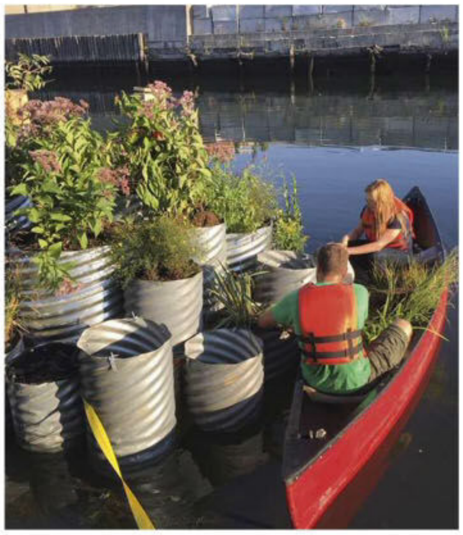


WATER GARDEN

Cleaning the city

Brooklyn's Gowanus Canal, one of the most polluted bodies of water in the USA, is now home to an experimental floating garden designed to filter and clean water. Created by New York landscape designers Balmori Associates, the garden uses sections of metal pipe to create solar stills (below left) – which harness the sun's heat to distil water – and to grow plants, such as *Iris versicolor*, that help clean water and others, such as *Eupatorium purpureum*, to attract pollinators. **balmori.com**





GREEN WALL

Green energy

The National Grid, which controls the UK's power distribution, has screened the multi-storey car park at its headquarters in Warwick with more than 1,000 square metres of green wall installed by ANS Global, making it one of the largest living walls in Europe. More than 25 plant species, many of them chosen to attract wildlife, provide year-round variety and colour.

Notebook

- Book now for a study day on the work of **Humphry Repton** at Pentillie Castle, Cornwall, on 12 March. Led by Repton specialist Keir Davidson, the day will concentrate on the 18th-century landscape designer's commissions in the Lower Tamar Valley, and includes a guided tour of the landscape at Pentillie. £85 per person, overnight package from £175. Tel 01579 350044, pentillie.co.uk
- If you're thinking about changing career to become a garden designer, then a new, one-day course at **RHS Garden Wisley**, Surrey, could be for you. Led by experts from the London College of Garden Design, the course takes place on 13 February and costs £110. Other new RHS courses, include, Making the Most of Winter Beauty, led by Noël Kingsbury at Wisley on 27 February, price £91, and a course aimed at helping beginner gardeners create a new garden, led by Ian Smith of Bicton College at **RHS Rosemoor**, Devon, also on 27 February, price £43. Discounts for RHS members are available for all of the above courses. Tel 020 3176 5830, rhs.org.uk
- There's still time to nominate a station for an **Energy Garden**. This project delivered by Repowering London, Groundwork and Transport for London is helping communities transform platforms on the London Overground line with ornamental plants and productive plots. energygarden.org.uk

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Royal Windsor has so much to inspire the visitor on a short break. Visit its world-famous Windsor Castle, or cross the river into Eton with its world-renowned college. Windsor is famous for its royal connections and is steeped in the pageantry and history of the Royal Family; Windsor Castle - one of the Queen's official royal residences, is a highlight of many a visit. Take a cruise on the River Thames to enjoy the sights of many British icons and enjoy the glorious Kew Gardens. We have two special departures that coincide with either the Chelsea Flower Show or Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, a must for both those with a keen interest in horticulture and a casual appreciation of beautiful gardens.

Day 1 Windsor. **Titan's VIP Home Departure Service®** collects you from home, for your journey to The Harte & Garter Hotel *(4T)* in Windsor. We aim for you to arrive at the hotel between 4pm and 5pm. Spend the afternoon at leisure, relaxing in the hotel or familiarising yourself with your surroundings - with Windsor Castle on your door step and the Thames River just a 5 minute stroll away. Dinner at the hotel is included this evening.

Day 2 Thames River Cruise. Enjoy an afternoon sightseeing from an included Thames River cruise. Gently passing by the spectacular waterfront sights and famous landmarks this is possibly the best way to experience London.

Day 3 Windsor. After breakfast, you are free to explore the city independently. Perhaps visit magnificent Windsor Castle. During its rich history of almost 1000 years, Windsor Castle has been the home of 39 monarchs in total and holds many royal treasures. Alternatively, we have two special departures that offer the opportunity to visit the Chelsea Flower Show or Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

Day 4 Kew. After breakfast, we have a half-day included excursion to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. London's only 300-acre UNESCO World Heritage Site comprises centuries of royal history. Explore glasshouses, landscapes and discover 250 years of history at the world's most famous garden. There is free time for lunch before we return to the hotel. Enjoy an afternoon of leisure before your included dinner tonight.

Day 5 Windsor. Following breakfast, you will be collected at 10am by your Titan vehicle, for the journey home.

£ Dates and prices

2016		August	
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ⓘ RHS Flower Shows

For those with a keen interest in plants, wildlife and gardening, we offer two dates in 2016 with additional excursions included to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show or Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

RHS Chelsea Flower Show - 25 May 2016

For those choosing our May departure, a full-day excursion to the iconic RHS Chelsea Flower Show is included. This world-famous show is an important venue for watching emerging gardening trends or searching for some green-fingered advice.

Hampton Court Palace Flower Show - 5 July 2016

In July, this Windsor itinerary includes a full-day excursion to Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. Exhibitors at Britain's largest flower show, aim to inspire as you meander through the multitude of beautiful displays.

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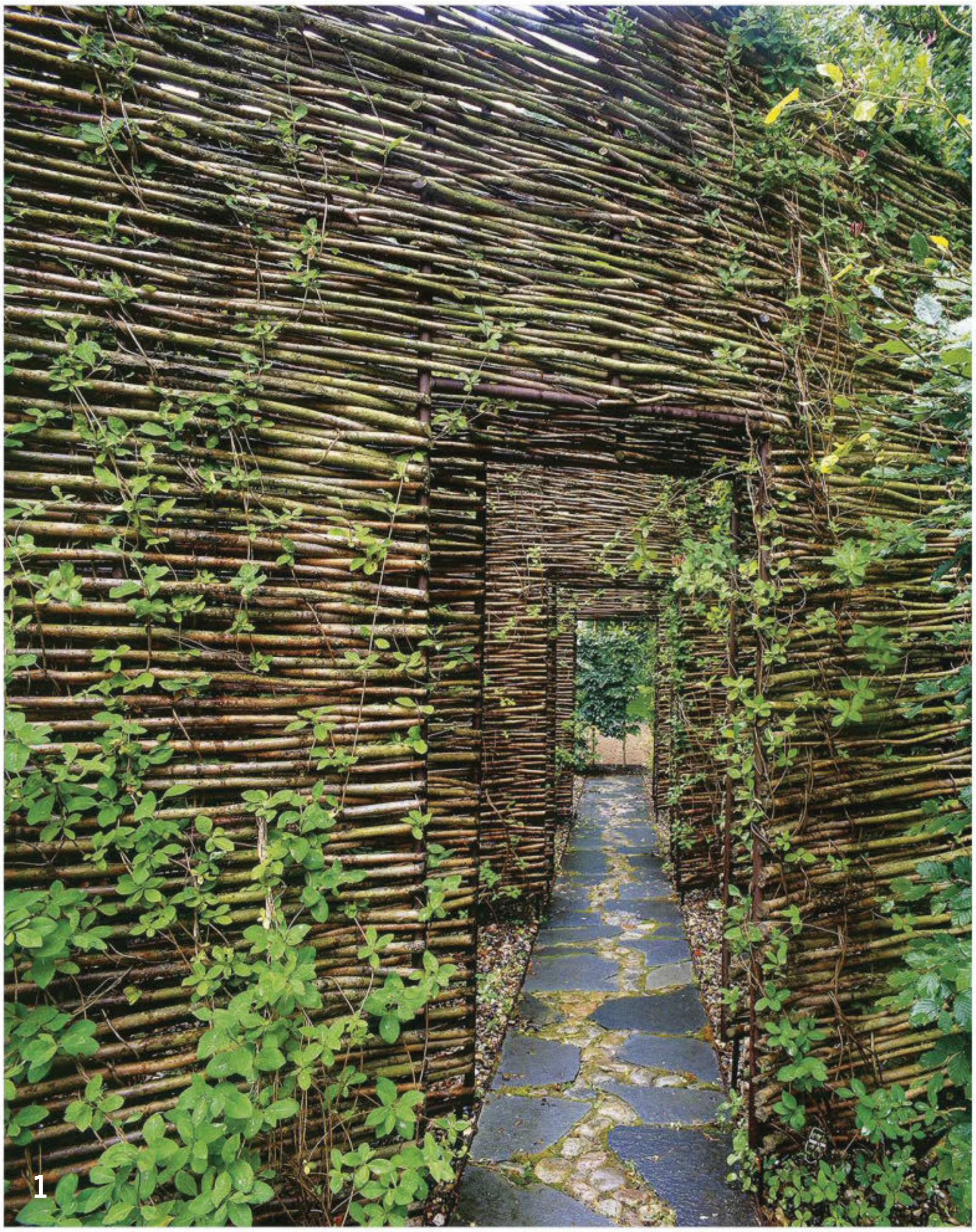
1 Dividing lines

This design by Swedish architects Wingårdhs shows how a traditional craft technique – in this case hurdle making – can be used in a contemporary manner; the hurdles are neatly framed within metal panels. The close repetition of the frames draws you in to explore the garden.



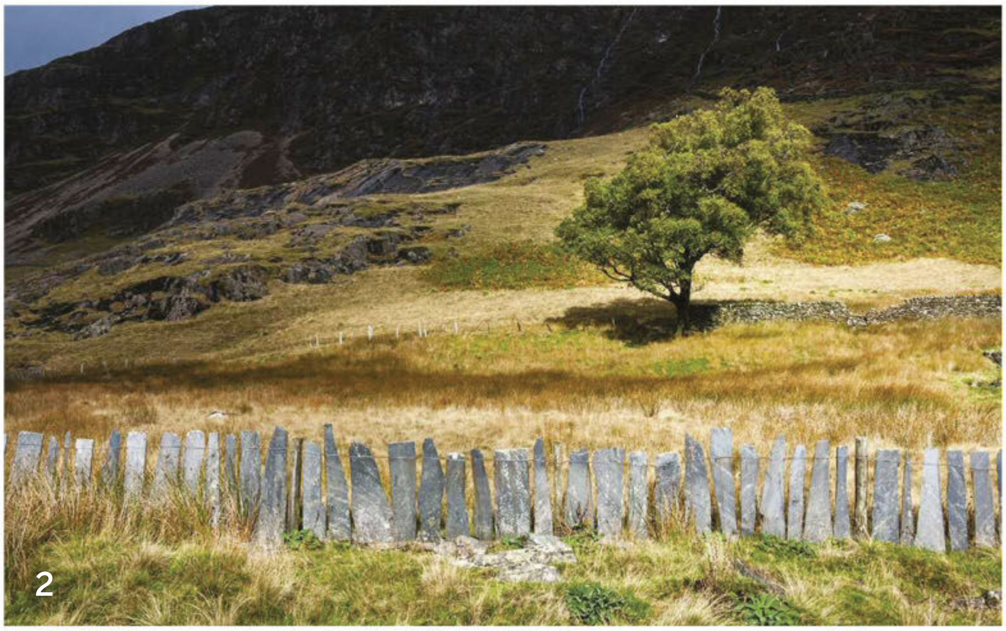
JAMES SILVERMAN

Sarah Price is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 Olympic Park.

Local heroes

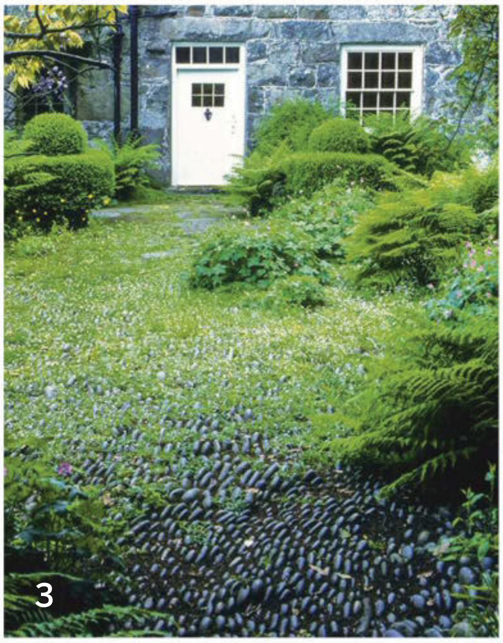
Using traditional, local materials and supporting local craftsmen needn't be costly and will give your garden design a timeless feel that's grounded in its locality

WORDS SARAH PRICE



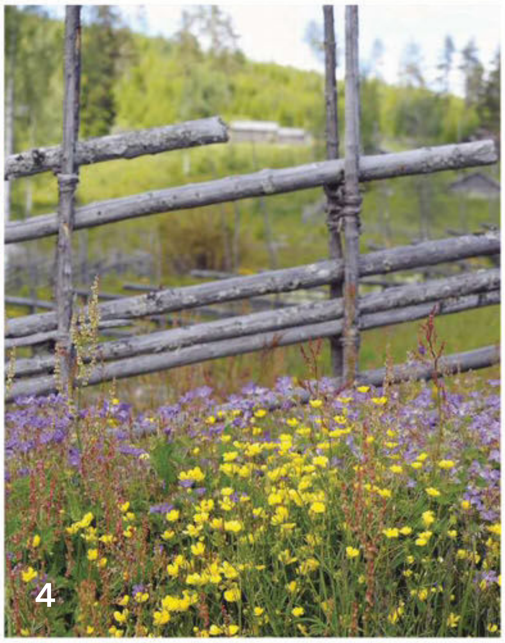
2 Standing stones

Travel to slate-rich Snowdonia, in north Wales and you'll see dramatic, sheets of slate linked together with wire to contain upland sheep. Here they demonstrate the powerful impact of repetition within a landscape.



3 Patterned paths

Observing the patterns of old paving can often spark ideas; here in the entrance garden at Plas yn Rhiw, a National Trust manor house on Gwynedd's Llyn Peninsula, in north Wales, cobblestones are laid as a uniform surface and only change direction in their pattern to announce a front door or side entrance. This detailing promotes a change in pace as you walk through the space.



4 Fencing in

Sweden's roundpole fences are a typical countryside feature; each province has its own style depending on local materials and customs. Traditionally, the spruce poles were long so that when they were in need of repair, they could easily be driven back into the ground. Amazingly, the oldest known roundpole fence dates back to the Iron Age.

2 ANDREW KEARTON / ALAMY; 3 CHARLES HAWES / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES; 4 ROBERT MATTON AB / ALAMY

For most of history people built houses and gardens using local materials and local techniques, for the simple reason that nothing else was available. Revolutions in transport changed all that and now architects and garden designers can get new ideas and materials from around the world at the click of a mouse. In fact it can be more expensive and logistically more difficult to source locally and use traditional methods. So what is the appeal of going local?

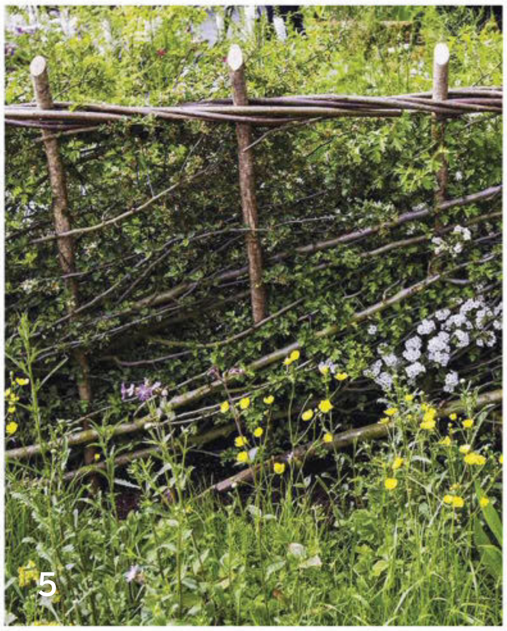
Good design begins with an appreciation of locality; from the views out into the wider landscape to the underlying geology, climate and ecology. Using local materials in a garden helps open a conversation with its surroundings. It's not about doing things a certain way just because that's how they've always been done. It's about developing a sense of connection with place that recognises a garden as part of a larger landscape and a timescale bigger than our own.

Almost every stone-bearing district in Europe has its own style of dry-stone field wall. Built by skilled hands they reflect the local geology and types of farming. In the Black Mountains in Wales, where I live, the dry-stone walls are often built on banks and some have ancient 'plashed' or 'laid' trees growing on top with massive horizontal trunks. Travel northwest to slate-rich Snowdonia and you'll see upright sheets of slate fastened together with metal wire, similar to the standing flagstones in parts of Orkney. Cornish hedge banks have earth at their centre and battered stone facings that harbour rich flora; wild thyme, pennywort and stonecrop.

Architects will often create detailed 'mood boards' of local vernacular styles to inform their designs, to capture the

5 Natural barriers

Laid hedges, such as this one from southern England, look beautiful even when first laid. If the cycle of laying and trimming is repeated every 15 to 25 years, hedges can last indefinitely.



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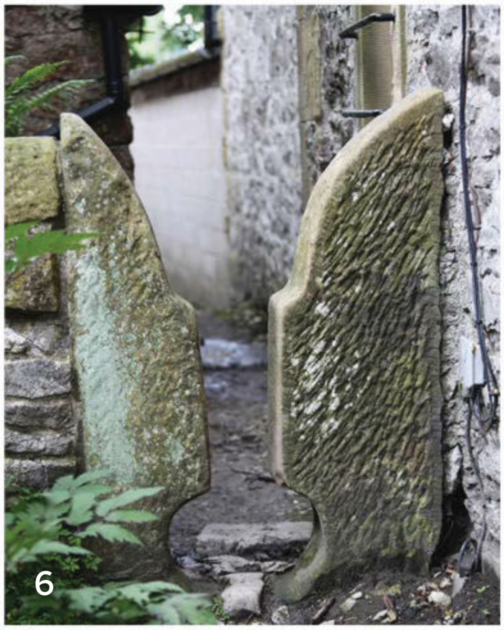
6 Bit of a squeeze

An ancient 'squeeze stile' in Hartington in the Peak District looks like a pair of angel's wings. In reality, it is a practical artefact; the gap is narrow enough to deter livestock while the curved profile gives space for your upper body and legs (provided you're slim enough) to squeeze through. Modern interpretations in metal or stone could be equally as striking.



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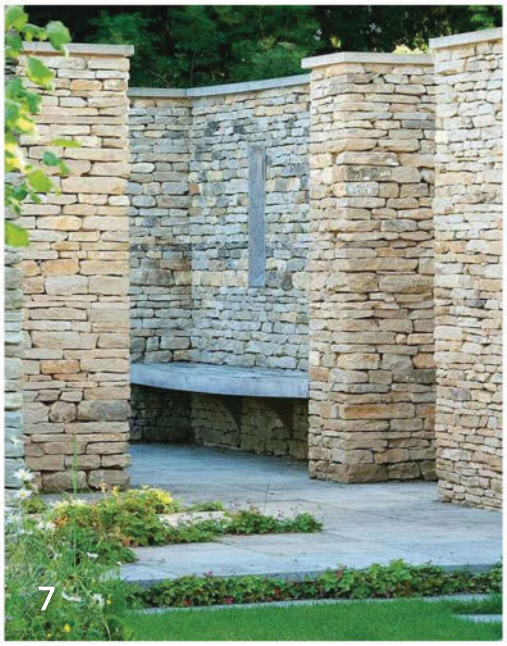
7 Tall story

At this Rectory garden in the Cotswolds [issue 199, page 30], designer Dan Pearson has used the local Oolitic limestone to create dry-stone walls with tall, cloister-like proportions. Slot-like windows reinforce the elegant dimensions.



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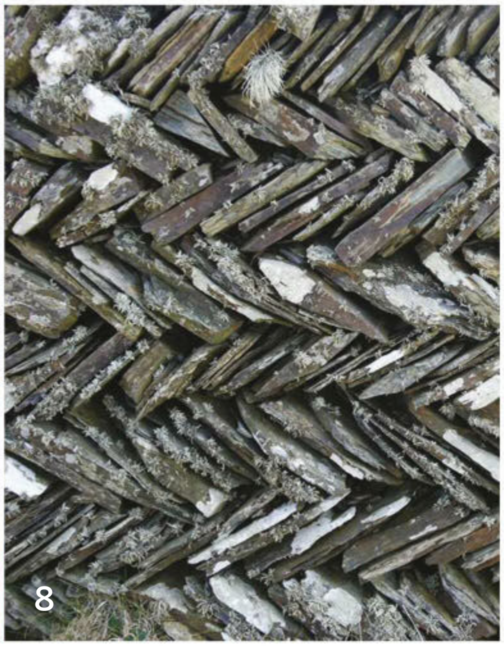
8 Ancient craft

Herringbone, a style of walling known locally as 'curzy way', is unique to north Cornwall, and was most probably introduced to Britain by the Romans.



8

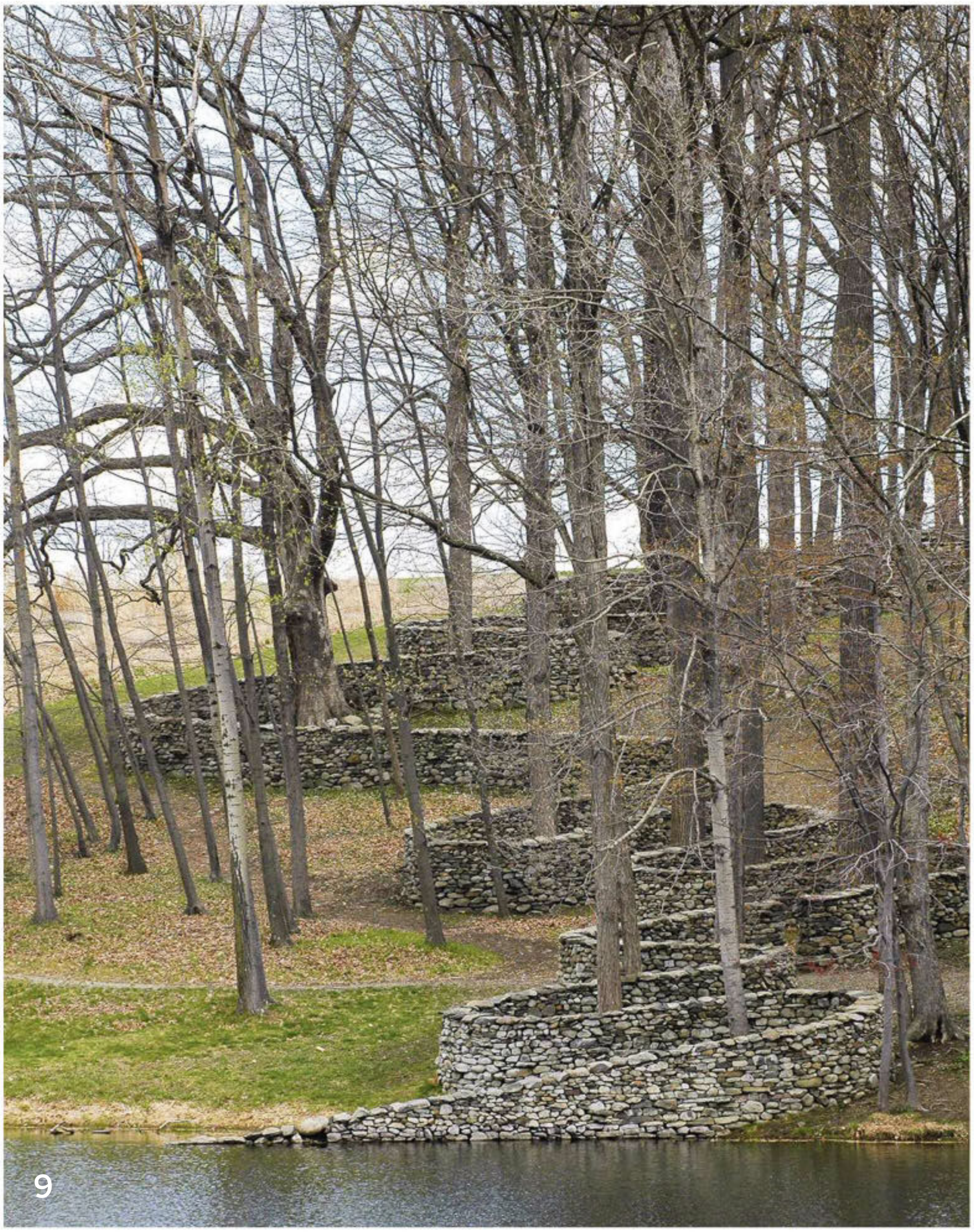
5 T M GRAHAM, 6 JACK E ELL S, 8 PNL, ALL ALAMY

▷ feel for local materials and distinctive details that make a place unique: from brick coursings, windows, joinery, signage to kerb stones. Garden designers can do the same and there is no reason why time-honoured crafts can't be used alongside modern manufacturing processes and aesthetics – done well, they accentuate each other.

Interesting designs tend to expose rather than smooth over the different layers of history. The Italian architect Carlo Scarpa, for example, carefully balances new and old; old brick alongside rough concrete inlaid with precious materials, such as copper, and glass juxtaposed against weathered local stone. The 'new' interventions are held apart from the old by reveal joints and variations in levels.

Simplicity is best; in my local woods a raised wooden boardwalk contrasts with a partially collapsed, mossy dry-stone wall; in urban settings roughly textured finishes in new materials can successfully emulate the character of nearby historic walls. To make a mixture of old and modern you need a strong, single-minded vision, otherwise you risk a jarring cacophony of disparate styles.

Local doesn't have to mean more expensive; our native trees can be laid into beautiful hedges and woven or tied to form flexible, growing structures. More than 30 different hedge-laying styles have evolved in Britain using techniques that date back to Roman times. Each regional style is unique and practical, tailored to local uses and conditions, and these were recently explained in more detail in *Gardens Illustrated* October 2015 [issue 226, page 72]. The best known is the stout Midlands bullock hedge but there is also the tall and thick Leicestershire



MA McCARRAN NYC / ALAMY

9 Winding wall

Land artist, Andy Goldsworthy, describes the stone walls of the UK countryside as a living part of the landscape. Working with skilled craftsmen, he creates artworks that meander through forests (left) or dry-stone walls that form his rectilinear artwork *Sheepfolds* in Cumbria.

Further information

You can find out more about regional styles of hedgelaying at **gardensillustrated.com/article/design/how-lay-hedge** You'll also find information on hedgerows at Hedgelink (**hedgelink.org.uk**) and the National Hedge Laying Society (**hedgelaying.org.uk**). The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (**dswa.org.uk**) provides information on this traditional craft, while Common Ground (**commonground.org.uk**) is a charity that champions local diversity. You can find out more about its work in: ***England In Particular*** by Sue Clifford and Angela King (Saltyard Books, 2006). And find out more about what makes your local area distinctive in the ***The Pevsner Architectural Guides***, a series of guide books on the architecture of the British Isles.

'bullfinch' hedge; in the South West the hedges are lower and denser because they enclose sheep rather than cattle. In Devon and the Welsh Marches hedges tend to be planted on banks.

Traditional 'soft engineering' techniques for river restoration are also underexploited; I'm experimenting with 'willow spiling' – where living willow is woven as a retaining structure – to stabilise a bank in my garden. The 'spiling' will only be around 30cm high and does not require footings and cement as a brick wall. All the investment will be in the labour; live willow rods woven between live willow uprights will form a flexible, growing structure, and the area behind will be filled with soil for the willow to root into.

Even neatly aligned 'brushwood bundles' and 'faggots' look architectural in the right setting, these are bundles of coppice, two or three metres long that are traditionally secured in place at the base of a river bank to stabilise and prevent erosion. I've seen them turned on their ends, tightly bound in a row to create a tall fence. Cleft oak, chestnut and hazel fencing panels can also look contemporary if presented within a crisp wooden or metal frame.

Traditional, slow, craft techniques are a counterblast to the blandness of mass production. Age-old crafts and their unsung makers have absorbing stories to tell. Beyond their obvious romantic appeal, time-honoured crafts are sustainable, practical, adaptable, durable and in harmony with the geographic and cultural context of a garden. It's not just about a reverie with the past; it's also about reinvention, experimentation and the forging of new collaborations with old traditions. □

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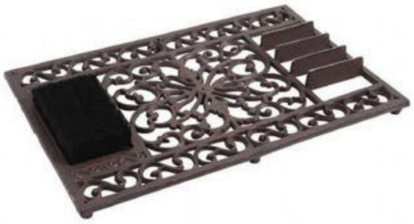

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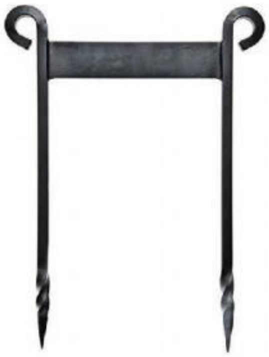

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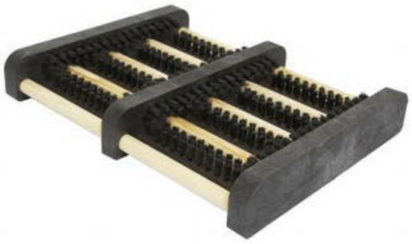

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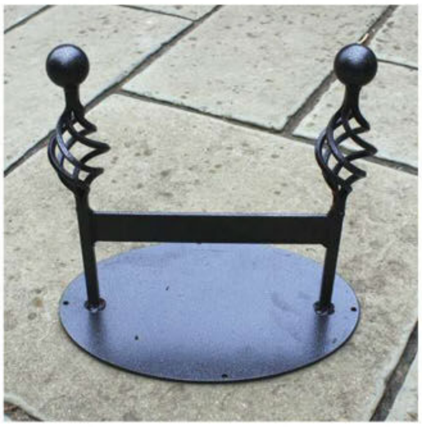

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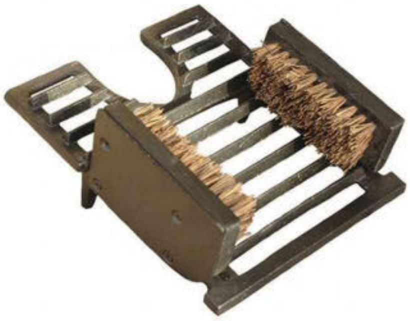

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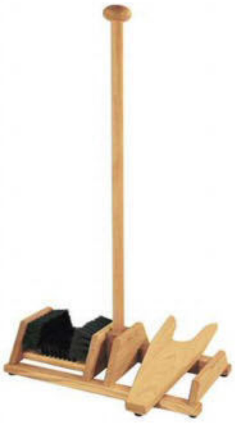

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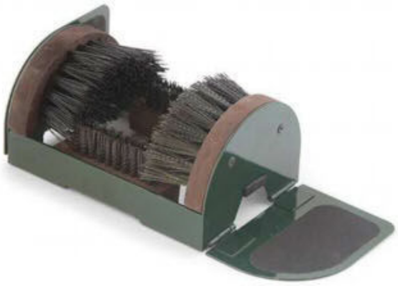

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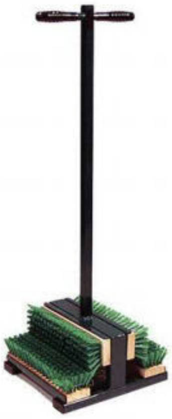

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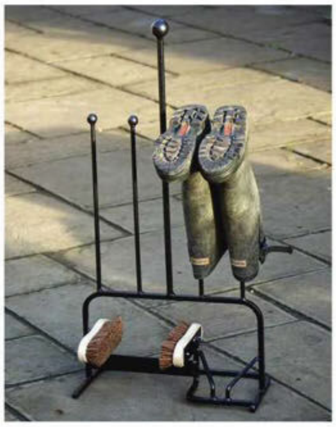

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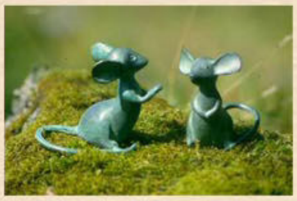
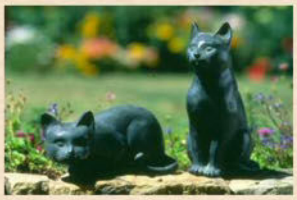


Pair of Mice : 10 cms high



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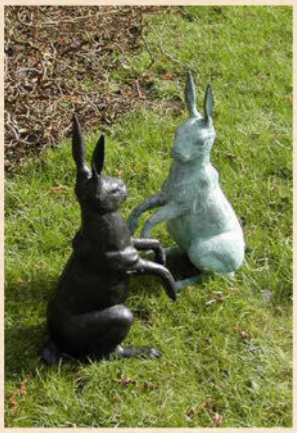
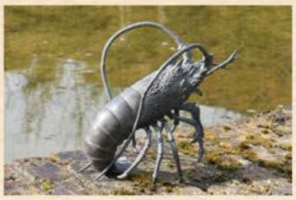


Hare 50 cms high



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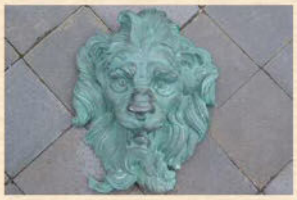
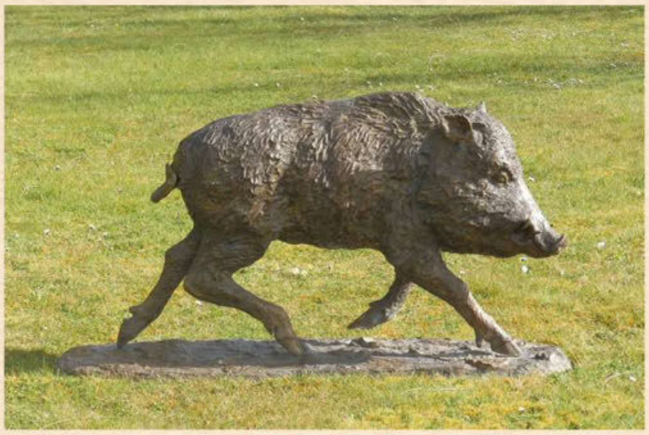


Lion Mask 48 cms high



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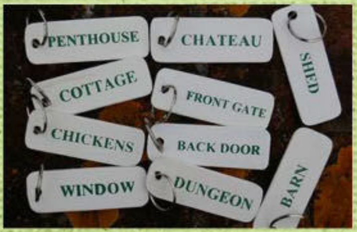
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SHED
COTTAGE
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CHICKENS
BACK DOOR
WINDOW
DUNGEON
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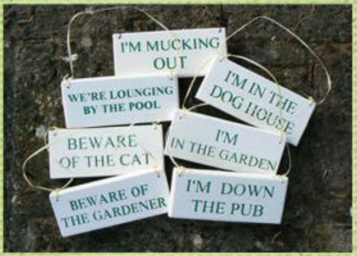
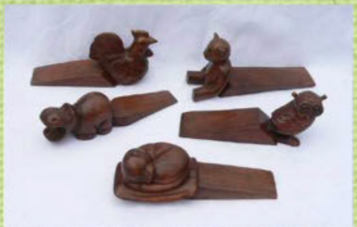
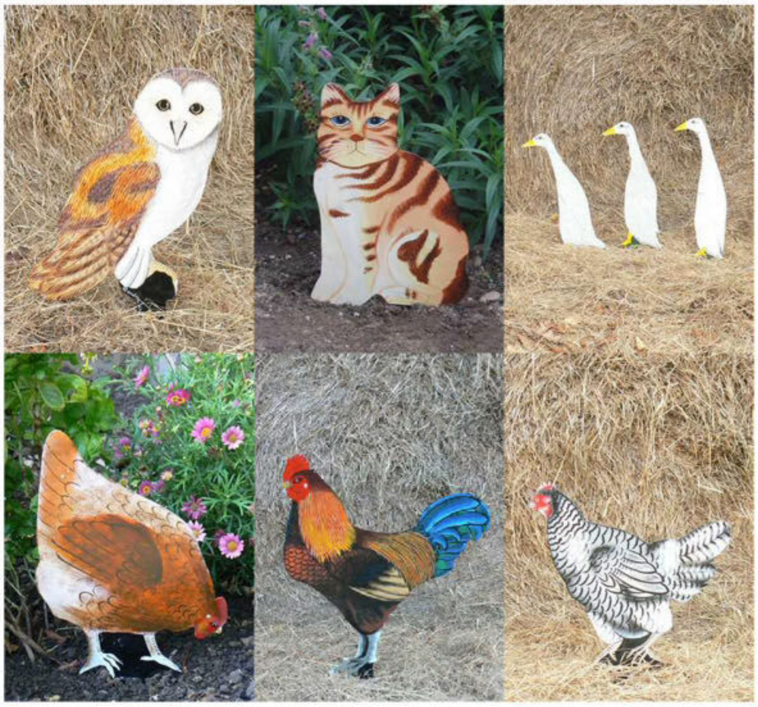
Wooden Keyrings : 95 Locations


I'M MUCKING OUT
WE'RE LOUNGING BY THE POOL
I'M IN THE DOG HOUSE
BEWARE OF THE CAT
I'M IN THE GARDEN
BEWARE OF THE GARDENER
I'M DOWN THE PUB

Hanging Wooden Signs : 70 Texts



Wooden Doorstops



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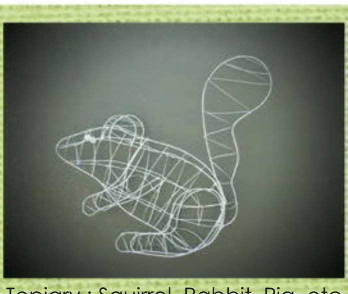

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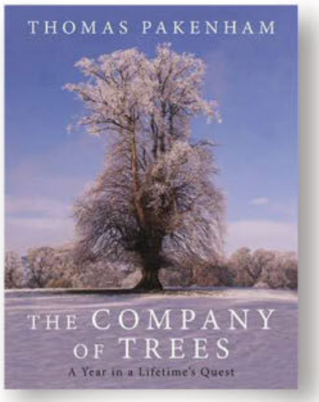
Downtools

Book reviews, crossword, back issues, shop, reader offers

This verdant woodland garden, designed by James Golden, illustrates the principles of Thomas Rainer and Claudia Westbook's book, *Planting in a Post-Wild World*, which is reviewed on page 102.

JAMES GOLDEN

Book reviews



THE COMPANY OF TREES: A YEAR IN A LIFETIME'S QUEST

by Thomas Pakenham

Orion Books, £30
ISBN 978-02978666244

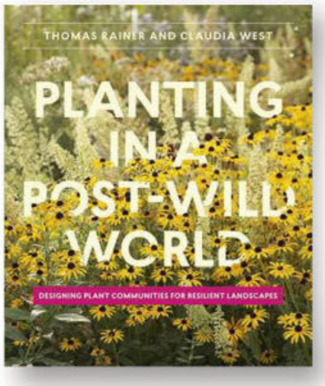
A year in the life of one of the tireless champions of trees, encompassing everything from travel to history and science.

Reviewer Caroline Beck is a writer and radio producer.

Writer Thomas Pakenham has extracted more from trees than an average timber merchant. His fascination started prosaically enough with a need to pay death duties on Tullynally, an Irish estate left to him in 1961 by his uncle. 'I was up to my ears in debt… so I wooed my creditors with spiky blue-green Sitka spruce, elegant Lodgepole pines and acrid smelling thuyas.' What began as a commercial relationship evolved into one of enthusiastic admiration not just for the many hundreds of trees he's planted in his arboretum, but as a vital component of the ecosystem upon which the entire population relies for its survival.

The book is written as a journal in a tone so natural you feel as if you're in his study at Tullynally as the wind soughs through the woods. His hard-won knowledge garnered over a lifetime of seed-collecting, planting and observation is displayed lightly so you absorb masses of information without ever feeling like you're at a dendrology conference. It's impossible not to feel affection for a man nearing 80 who not only plants a copse of rare *Magnolia campbellii* Alba Group from seed, but collects that seed himself from a mountainside in Sikkim, India. At the end of the book, when a pair of these 'white goddesses' germinate and he gives them to his new grandchildren, you understand that trees are not only bound up with his family, but he regards trees as family. Like every good parent, he's open about his mistakes – trees planted too close together, or in the wrong conditions – and you sense his grief when storms rage across Tullynally ripping up trees that have been there for centuries. Pakenham's optimism and concern for future generations, both trees and people, is infectious. The world's trees could not have a more compelling advocate.

Book offer
RRP £30. **Reader offer price £27** including p&p*.



PLANTING IN A POST-WILD WORLD: DESIGNING PLANT COMMUNITIES FOR RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

by Thomas Rainer and Claudia West

Timber Press, £25
ISBN 978-1604695533

This thought-provoking book from two of the leading voices in ecological landscape design combines passion with practical how-to.

Reviewer Sarah Price is a garden designer and garden writer.

If the idea of a 'post-wild' world sounds somewhat apocalyptic, there is no denying that with each passing decade there is less wilderness on the planet. In countries such as Britain, where true wilderness is but a distant memory, the pressure of urban and suburban development and the intensification of agriculture are eating into natural habitats all around us.

As wildness becomes more scarce, so its value increases. The beauty and harmony of natural plant communities is an increasingly important source of inspiration for landscape architects and garden designers. Though naturalistic planting can earn its place in any garden, in urban settings it is elevated to the status of a nature cure, bringing transcendent glimpses of meadow, steppe or woodland into harsh and alienating built environments defined by concrete, glass and asphalt.

This book sets out to celebrate and explain how planting design that recreates and reworks natural plant communities can 'create landscapes that are resilient, beautiful and diverse'. As one of those responsible for advancing this way of working, I found much in the book to agree with. The concepts are explained clearly and there is a good selection of well-illustrated examples. Particularly interesting to me was Rainer's account of native plant communities from north America that are quite different from the northern European ecologies I most often find myself working with.

Though the more instructional chapters, written by landscape designer Claudia West, read a little like a text book, overall the book is as much about inspiration as education. Going beyond explaining how to use plant communities as the basic building blocks of design, Rainer's lyrical, passionate and persuasive writing could convince even the most sceptical that it's the right thing to do.

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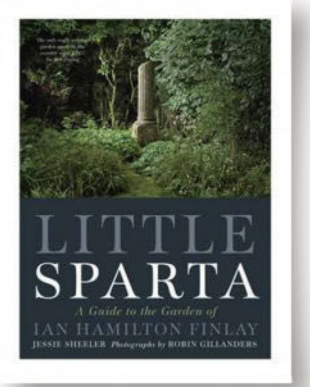

LITTLE SPARTA: A GUIDE TO THE GARDEN OF IAN HAMILTON FINLAY

by Jessie Sheeler,
photography by Robin Gillanders

Birlinn, £14.99
ISBN 978-1780272948

A comprehensive guidebook to one of the most significant gardens in Britain, exploring its artwork and their underlying themes.

Reviewer Paula McWaters is a gardening writer and editor.

Little Sparta is an iconic garden that many will know from photographs but, because of its relatively remote Scottish location, far fewer will have experienced in person, so this informed armchair guide is a boon. Billed as a new companion (the author wrote a guide book in 2003, now superseded by this), it brings us up to date with the maturation of the garden over the past 50 years.

Richly overlaid with poetry in its 275 inscribed artworks in stone and wood, Little Sparta's ten acres seem at first glance to make up a calm, romantic domain but Sheeler explores greater depth here. The garden not only offered a showcase for Ian Hamilton Finlay's work as a concrete poet, philosopher and artist, it actually became a work of art in its own right. Sheeler talks of 'the great library of creative thought and imagery stored in Finlay's head and heart' but she also acknowledges the associated struggles, including tales of increasingly acrimonious run-ins with the local council over rates bills.

Each area of the garden, from The Battle Monument to The English Parkland is given its own chapter and the casual reader may glean all he or she needs from the one-page introductions, advancing into the detail, as required. Written descriptions of artwork can risk lapsing into Pseud's Corner but there is none of that here. Sheeler's intelligently written text conveys Finlay's work and intentions convincingly. She worked with Finlay, co-founding Little Sparta's publishing arm, Wild Hawthorn Press, in the early 1960s and you sense that she understood him well.

This book would be invaluable to a visitor and it also offers great insight to anyone wishing to learn about Little Sparta from afar, especially given the generous use of Robin Gillanders' atmospheric photographs.

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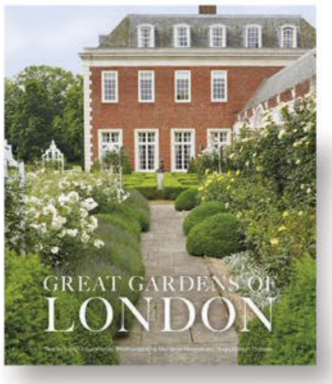

THE GREAT GARDENS OF LONDON

by Victoria Summerley,
photography by Marianne
Majerus and Hugo
Rittson Thomas
Frances Lincoln, £30
ISBN 978-0711236110

A celebration of the diversity found in the capital's gardens, through a series of gloriously illustrated, stand-alone essays.

Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

What does a London garden look like? With its temperate climate, extensive green spaces and cultural diversity almost anything is possible. From a hopeful collection of pots on a windowsill, to a manicured set-piece, does any other city display a greater variety of horticultural self-expression?

Award-winning news journalist and passionate gardener Victoria Summerley lived in London for 30 years before recently heading off to the Cotswolds. *Great Gardens of London* is a love song to the city she left behind. 'London's gardens offer a huge variety of styles and plants,' she writes. Like the city's architecture, they are a beguiling mix of old and new.'

Here Summerley presents 30 very different gardens, ranging from the magnificent 12.5 acres surrounding Winfield House, the Regent's Park home of the US ambassador, to a group of garden barges moored on the Thames in Bermondsey. The gardens are grouped by theme – including Wild in the City and High-Rise Retreats – but really this is a collection of stand-alone essays, lavishly illustrated with excellent photographs.

Summerley writes evocatively and intelligently. She explains how Horace Walpole's Whig beliefs helped shape his plans for Strawberry Hill in Twickenham, the part that Roman poet Virgil played in a largely home-made roof garden in Islington, and why designer Cleve West seems more at home on his allotment in Bushy Park than at the Chelsea Flower Show.

This is a book to enjoy as much for its pointed comments about the paucity of informative signage at the Olympic Park as for its enthusiastic exploration of a potter's garden in Muswell Hill where features include a Liberace Terrace edged in plastic fencing from the local pound shop.

So what does a London garden look like? Apparently, anything you want it to…

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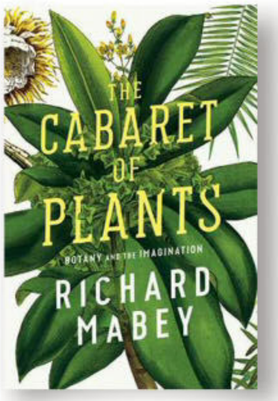
Book reviews



THE CABARET OF PLANTS

by Richard Mabey

Profile Books, £20
ISBN 978-1861976628

'Plants make us think,' insists Richard Mabey. So why don't we accord them the same respect we might give to a tiger or a dolphin?

Reviewer Ambra Edwards is a writer and garden historian.

In very small letters, beneath the beguiling main title, runs the subhead, 'Botany and the Imagination'. It's a curious way to present the very big idea that powers this book, namely how plants have infiltrated the architecture of the human imagination, seeming 'to illuminate the processes and paradoxes of our own lives.'

Foraging for samphire in glutinous Norfolk mud, Mabey divined that 'the divisions between plant as sustenance for the body and nourishment for the imagination, and between scientific fascination and Romantic inspiration, were fluid'. This started him on his career as a writer, and decades on, his mission remains to recall the 'ancient wonder' that once haloed the kingdom of plants. Even in the 19th century, marvels such as *Victoria amazonica* excited the popular imagination. Today, by contrast, we have adopted a crudely utilitarian stance that reduces vegetable life to a mere 'biological proletariat'.

Mabey's range of reference is colossal, from Palaeolithic bone art to the latest research into plant intelligence that demonstrates that plants can actually learn. Occasionally his wildly diverse list of topics – the study of photosynthesis, Mayan maize myths, fern-hunting, Keats – appears to outrun his energies, and there are passages that feel mechanical. Then something seizes his imagination – the complex chemical signalling network that underlies every forest, or the extraordinary tricks played by orchids on their pollinators – and he takes flight once more, as joyously intoxicated by the cleverness of plants as his 'randy and hurrying bee'.

Mabey on top form is enthralling, funny and wise. His message is crucial: that understanding plants as 'vital, autonomous beings' is essential to both their survival and our own.

Book offer

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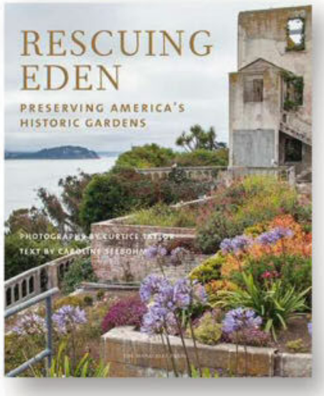
RESCUING EDEN
PRESERVING AMERICA'S HISTORIC GARDENS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CURTICE TAYLOR
TEXT BY CAROLINE SEEBOHM

RESCUING EDEN: PRESERVING AMERICA'S HISTORIC GARDENS

by Caroline Seebohm,
photography by Curtice Taylor

Monacelli Press, £40
ISBN 978-1580934084

Reveals the American approach to preserving gardens and showcases 30 gardens in the USA whose future has been secured.

Reviewer Graham Rice is a garden writer and blogger.

Gardens are fragile treasures. Without regular maintenance they soon fall into ruin, and without expert maintenance they can easily lose the character that marks them out as special.

In Britain, The National Trust looks after over 200 important gardens large and small but, as Caroline Seebohm points out in the introduction to this fascinating book, there is no American equivalent. It is ironic that Hidcote Manor, the first British garden taken on by the Trust in 1947, was created by an American, Lawrence Johnston, when American gardens in need of preservation had no national organisation to help them, until the creation of the Garden Conservancy in 1989.

So while many fine American gardens have been lost, *Rescuing Eden* reveals 30 whose future has been secured: Nancy Goodwin's garden, Montrose, in North Carolina, from which so many fine cultivars emerged, has been guaranteed by her creation of a foundation. The Virginia garden of civil rights activist Anne Spencer depends on the enthusiasm of a local garden club.

The writing is thoughtful and well researched and focuses on the history of the gardens and how their futures came to be assured. But in many cases the text is uncomfortably brief. Georgia's Barnsley Gardens, for example, has a dramatic history until rescued by a Bavarian prince – but there are seven pages of pictures and only one short page of text. Curtice Taylor's photography, however, is honest and has not been over enhanced to make the shots more glamorous; fortunately, such interventions are unnecessary.

A total of 30 gardens from the 1740s to the 1990s, from Maine and Oregon to Florida and California, are featured, providing a tempting insight into America's gardens and how they have been saved – and a glimpse of what's been lost.

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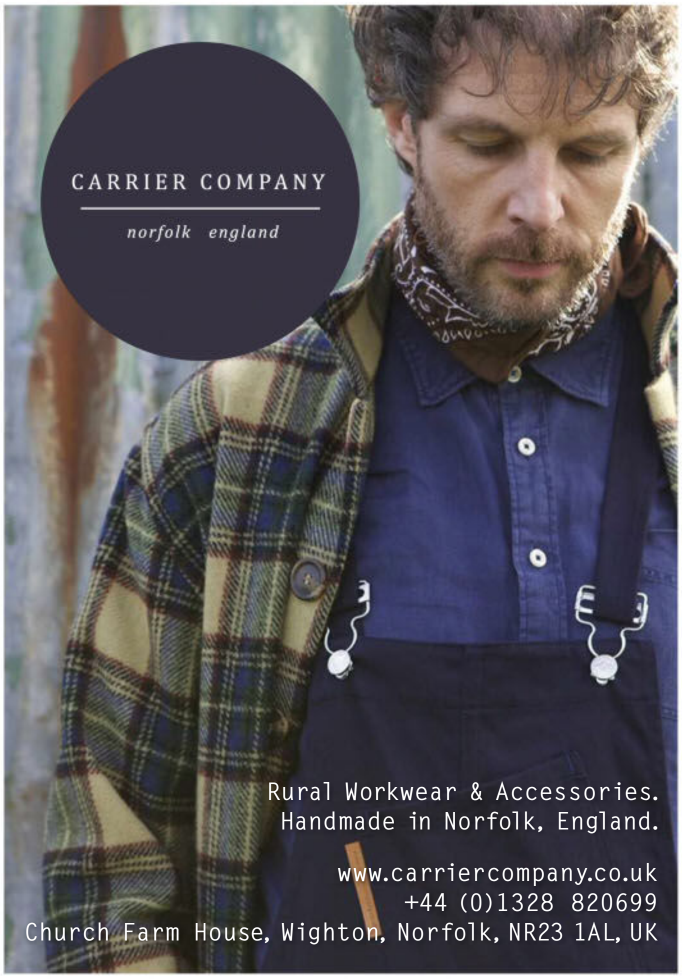
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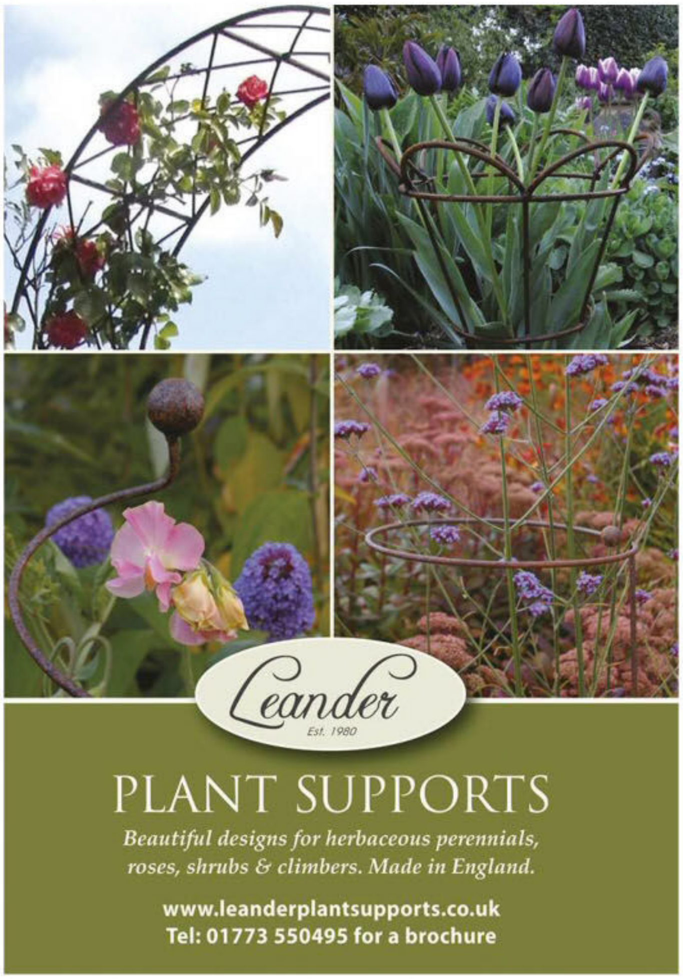
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Book reviews

RICHARD HARTLEDGE · SANDY FISCHER
THE AUTHENTIC GARDEN
NATURALISTIC AND CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE DESIGN

THE AUTHENTIC GARDEN: NATURALISTIC & CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE DESIGN

by Richard Hartledge
and Sandy Fischer

Monacelli Press, £40
ISBN 978-1580934268

A well-informed survey of contemporary American garden design, with the emphasis on naturalistic planting style.

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden critic and regular columnist.

Sometimes it's as if the USA is isolationist even when it comes to garden design, but this rich and detailed survey gives the lie to that notion. The authors have set out to show the way foreign designers – including Karl Foerster and Gertrude Jekyll – have influenced US garden makers, with Dutchman Piet Oudolf (of New York's High Line fame) presented as the guru *de nos jours*.

Capacious chapters cover generalised themes while devoting a paragraph or two to several score of today's designers, not all of whom will be familiar to European readers (the work of Jeffrey Carbo was new to me).

The book's strength is its range, while the analysis tends to be a little simplistic. The central thesis is that 'beauty for beauty's sake is making a comeback' and that planting design is the vehicle. Such statements reinforce the old binary distinction between 'soft' planting and 'hard' architectural design. If Arts and Crafts taught us anything it is that this is a false opposition.

The book's best sections are devoted to contemporary meadow planting and the exciting work of Andrea Cochran and the authors' own company, Land Morphology. One small garden they designed in New Jersey features purple coleus, scarlet begonias and pillars of variegated euonymus. The result is a paint-factory explosion that would surely have raised the eyebrows of even the late Christopher Lloyd.

One cavil is the title of this book. 'Authentic' is a difficult term to justify but there are various potential interpretations that could have been advanced. Oddly, the authors leave it entirely unexamined, which leads one to suspect it was a marketing ploy by the publishers.

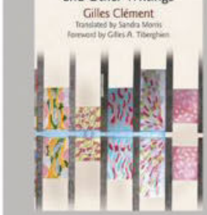
Despite some shortcomings, its strengths outweigh the weaknesses and this is now the most useful survey of 21st-century American garden style available.

Book offer

RRP £40. **Reader offer price £35** including p&p*.

Other books

From savvy solutions for saving space to the poetry of the pastoral landscape – we select the rest of the best


"The Planetary Garden" and Other Writings
Gilles Clément
Translated by Sandra Morris
Foreword by Gilles A. Tiberghien

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Penn Press, £23
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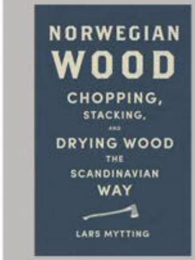
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CHOPPING, STACKING, AND DRYING WOOD THE SCANDINAVIAN WAY
LARS MYTTING

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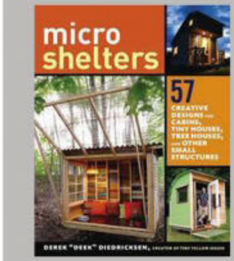
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DEREK "DEEK" DIEDRICKSEN

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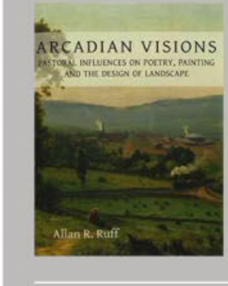
ARCADIAN VISIONS
PASTORAL INFLUENCES ON POETRY, PAINTING AND THE DESIGN OF LANDSCAPE
Allan R. Ruff

ARCADIAN VISIONS

By Allan R Ruff
Windgather Press, £39.95
ISBN 978-1909686663

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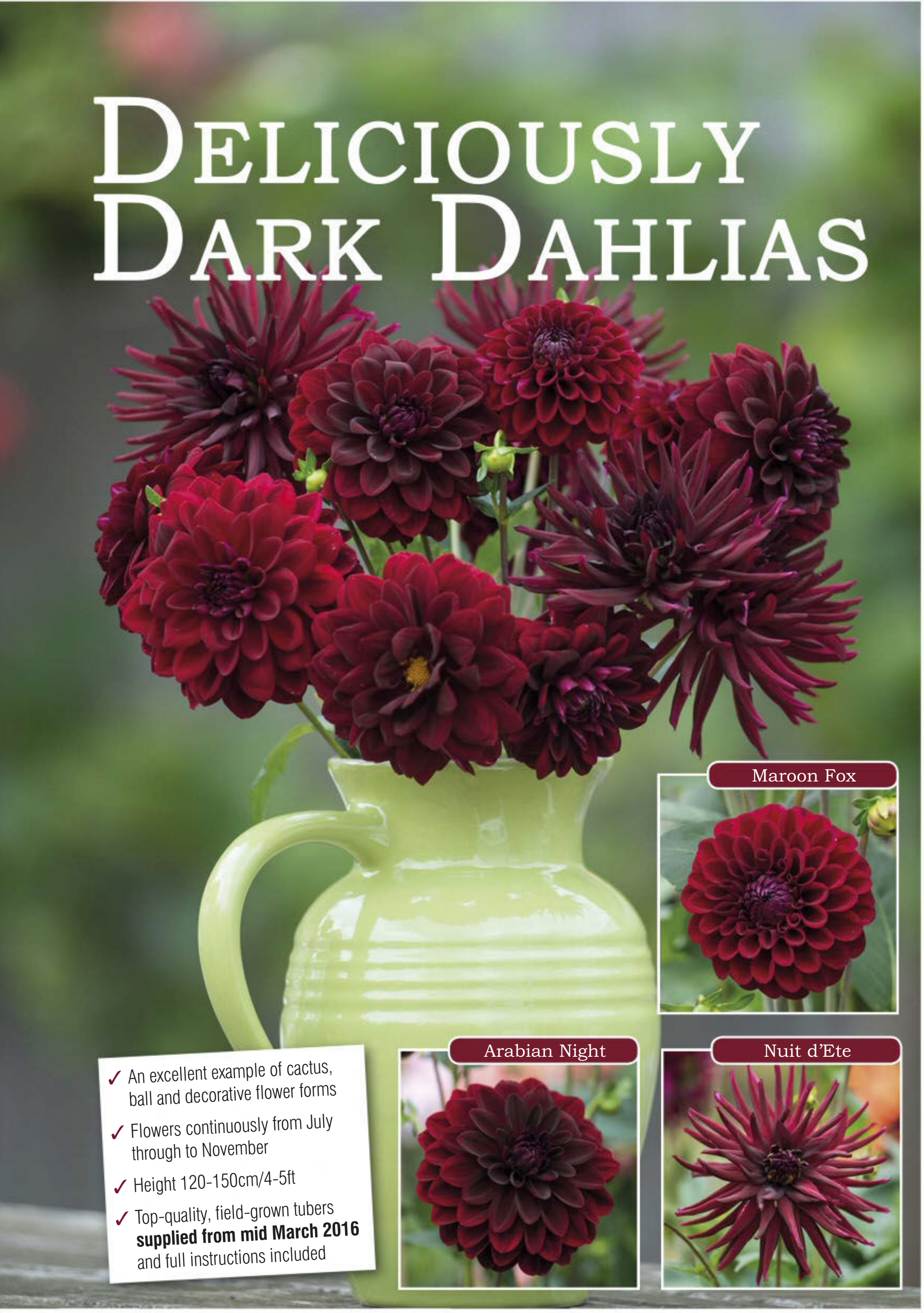

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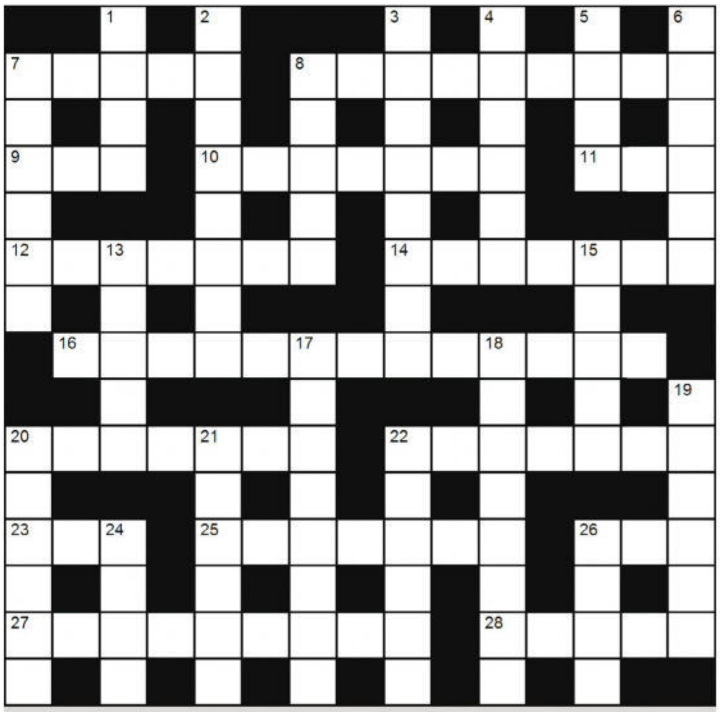

ACROSS

7 Which person has right/left ring of leaves around a stem? (5)

8 Harlequin's beloved plant of *Aquilegia* genus? (9)

9 Plant container, however, back to front (3)

10 Mistake flowering plant (7)

11 Balfour's first... woman in the first garden? (3)

12 Genus of stone-like succulents – illuminated plants used in brewing (7)

14 Unusual aphis at this umbellifer, aka 'deadly carrot' (7)

16 The applying of eg bonemeal (if it's oriental variety) (13)

20 Genus of fescue grasses, maybe safe cut back inside (7)

22 Gets a cutting to take root, stops work! (7)

23 Tree of *Ulmus* genus (3)

25 Genus of clump-forming perennials of saxifrage family – all-time variation (7)

26 Bitter-scented shrub in flipping secateurs! (3)

27 Genus of tansy and feverfew – 'Brown Expert Pot'? (9)

28 A little alonsoa (Sissinghurst) used by flower arranger (5)

DOWN

1 19th-century plant-collecting brothers, William and Thomas, left Bob perhaps (4)

2 Fungal disease especially harmful to cabbages (4,4)

3 Climbing plant with feathery seeds, changing climates (8)

4 An Asiatic lily, popular for bouquets – one in Burma, perhaps (6)

5 Tiny garden pest's power, it's said (4)

6 Somehow heard about English ivy (6)

7 Common name for Australian acacias – at wet rocks, left inside (6)

8 Cuts off unwanted parts of plant's total produce? (5)

13 Boxes, say, found in an arboretum (5)

15 Supply of scented *Matthiola* plants (5)

17 Pamphlets: "Diminutive growths on stem" (8)

18 Sort of arrogant, aromatic herb (8)

19 Daisy-like flowers some wormcast, er, spoilt (6)

20 Cox-style apple carnival (6)

21 Nettle genus – curtail endlessly wild (6)

22 Pollen-receiving part of flower – bad sign? (6)

24 Some alyssum, in effect, belonging to yours truly (4)

26 Flower attached to watering can? (4)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

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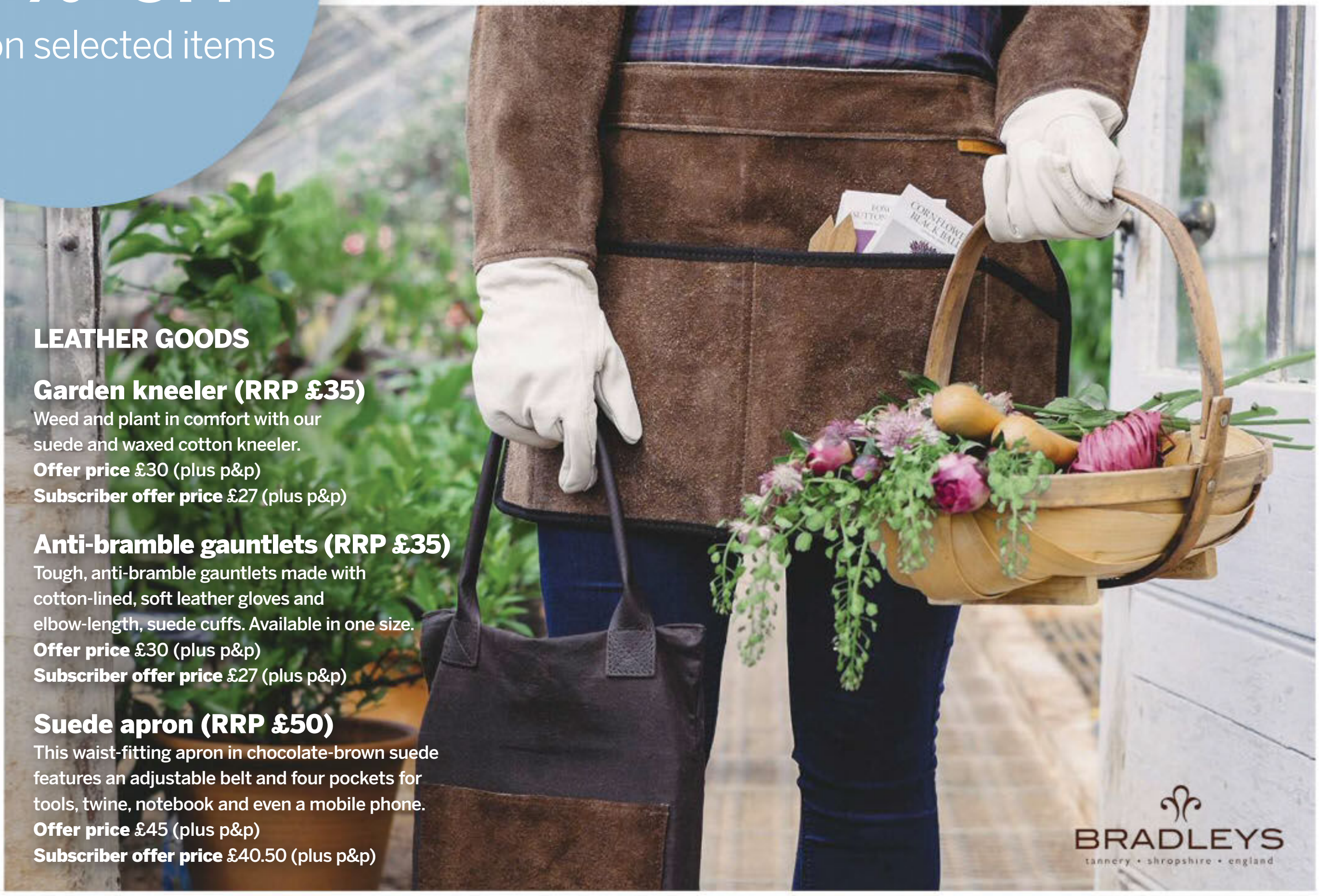

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SAVE £10 on tickets

Enjoy an exciting classical season at the Royal Festival Hall

Gardens Illustrated readers will be able to enjoy special offers to Mozart Masterpieces, Beethoven's *Ninth* and Grand Organ Gala this spring

A selection of sublime favourites by one of the world's most loved composers will be performed in Mozart Masterpieces including excerpts from *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and the achingly beautiful *Piano Concerto No. 21*.

The concert on Saturday 13 February at 7.30pm will be performed by the Mozart Festival Orchestra and star soloists including the exciting up-and-coming pianist Ji Liu.

This will be followed on Saturday 27 February at 7.30pm by an all Beethoven concert by the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Bach Choir, which culminates with the impressive *Ninth Symphony* and its magnificent 'Ode to Joy'.

The final concert in this prestigious season will be the Grand Organ Gala on Friday 4 March at 7.30pm. One of the UK's most acclaimed organists, Stephen Disley, will perform fantastic pieces, such as Saint-Saëns' *Symphony No. 3*, on the magnificently restored Royal Festival Hall organ. He will be accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Goldsmiths Choral Union.

Reader Promotion

- Save £10.00 per ticket on top two ticket prices. **Call the Box Office now on 0844 847 9910** and quote GARDENS or **book online at southbankcentre.co.uk** and enter GARDENS.
- Lines are open 9am to 8pm weekdays. Calls may be recorded and/or monitored for quality assurance, training and as a record of the conversation.

Terms and conditions

This offer is subject to availability, does not apply to tickets already purchased and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or existing discount. A transaction fee of £2.75 applies.

Reader offers

Discount on online garden courses

MyGardenSchool is the world's first online gardening school, offering certified gardening courses for enthusiasts and professional gardeners alike. Students can access world-class tutors and study whenever and wherever they like. There are 24 courses to choose from, whether you want to learn how to grow organic veg, design your own garden, create planting designs or find ways to attract more wildlife to your garden. All courses are taught by garden experts, such as John Brookes, MBE, Dr Noël Kingsbury and Andy McIndoe.

And **new for 2016** is the Scented Garden Expert – a four-week course that looks at the science behind scent and its powerful effect on us, as well as covering planting plans and plants to maximise scent. The tutor is Dr Rachel Petheram, gardener, florist and lecturer from Doddington Hall.

Reader offer

MyGardenSchool is offering *Gardens Illustrated* readers two discount options:

- Book now for the new Scented Garden Expert and get 15% off (valid until 6 April 2016). Normal price £185 – offer price £157.25.
- Get 10% off all MyGardenSchool courses (valid until 3 August 2016). Course prices range from £120 to £480.

Course structure

- Weekly video tutorials
- Optional assignments
- Personal feedback from your tutor
- Access to online classroom to chat with fellow students
- Two approved learning credits with the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD).

How to apply

Go to **my-garden-school.com** and find the course you are interested in.

- For the 15% discount on the Scented Garden Expert with Dr Rachel Petheram use code **GARDEN15** (valid until 6 April 2016).
- For the 10% discount on all MyGardenSchool courses use code **GARDEN10** (valid until 3 August 2016). Offers cannot be combined.

For more information contact fiona@my-online-school.co.uk

Learn the science behind scent, plus how to grow irresistible scented plants.

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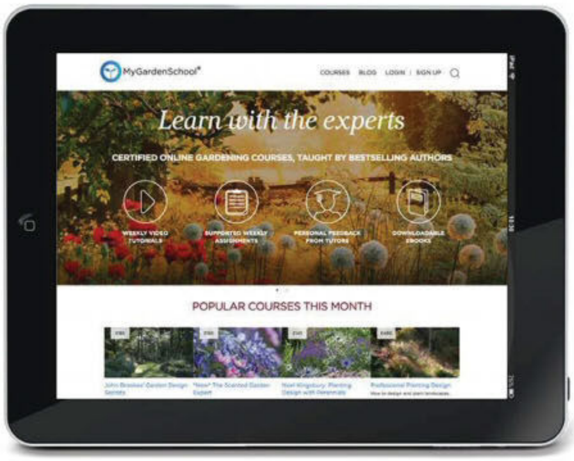

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POPULAR COURSES THIS MONTH

Your tutor for the Scented Garden Expert is **Dr Rachel Petheram**, gardener and florist from Doddington Hall.

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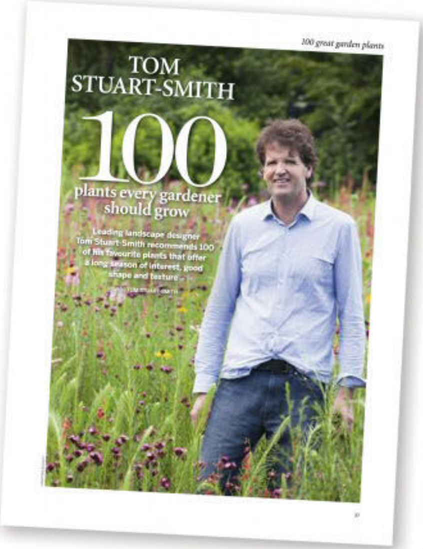

100 great garden plants

TOM
STUART-SMITH
100
plants every gardener
should grow

Leading landscape designer Tom Stuart-Smith recommends 100 of his favourite plants that offer a long season of interest, good shape and texture…

This month's 100 recommended plants (page 37) from award-winning designer Tom Stuart-Smith offers plenty of inspiration for your own garden for the season ahead. Start planning your planting combinations now and take advantage of this 15% discount from online plant nursery Crocus.

How to order To select plants and seeds, go to **crocus.co.uk** and make your selection. To gain the discount enter the code **90166** when prompted. Your 15 per cent discount will be applied at the checkout stage.

Delivery
Standard delivery charge is £4.99. Delivery to mainland UK only, excluding certain part of Scotland. Open to UK addresses only. Please check Crocus's website for full details on delivery areas.

Offer closes 29 February 2016.

Please note Offer valid for plants and seed only featured on crocus.co.uk. All plants are subject to availability. While Crocus stocks a large range of plants, it doesn't necessarily stock all 100 of Tom's selection. To find suppliers of specific cultivars, please check the RHS *Plant Finder* book or rhs.org.uk/Plants/Search-Form

Offer excludes all garden products and machinery, as well as gift vouchers and delivery.

Limited-edition photographic prints

We are delighted to be offering readers the opportunity to buy these gorgeous prints taken by photographer Andrew Montgomery. They originally featured in an article on cut flowers in our plant special issue [issue 229, page 52] and were just so lovely that we wanted to frame them.

Available in two sizes and limited to a run of 50 prints per image in each size, the photographs are reproduced as archival quality giclée prints on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 310gsm paper, which gives a warm, textured matte finish.

With many thanks to Anne Townley of Ascott Gardens who created these cut flower selections: ascottgardens.co.uk

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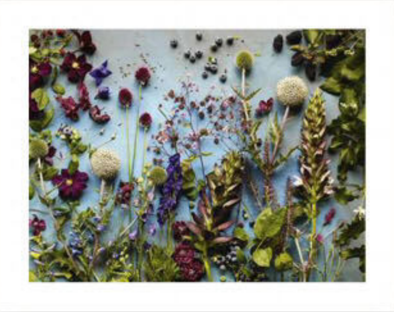

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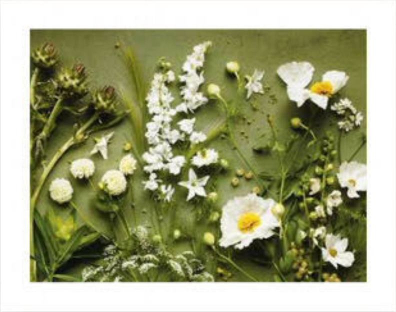

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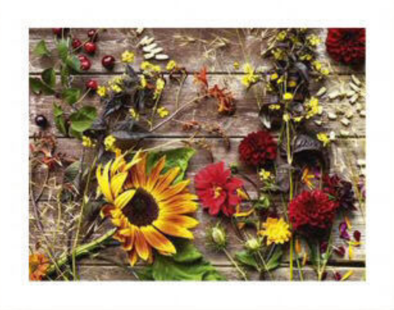

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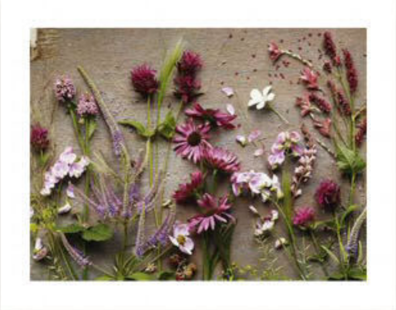

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Go to **gardensillustrated.com/shopart** to choose your print and size. You can also call 0344 245 8098 quoting GIART. This is a limited edition of 50 prints per image in each size.

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Spectacular snowdrops

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Experience one of the UK's finest Snowdrop Walks at Rode Hall & Gardens in Cheshire to mark the start of Spring. A beautiful end-of-winter walk for all the family with a wonderfully diverse landscape and over 70 varieties of snowdrops. Homemade light lunches and cream teas available. Sat 30 January-Sun 6 March, Tues-Sun 11am-4pm (Closed Mondays).

ADDRESS **Scholar Green,**
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TEL **01270 873237**
WEB **rodehall.co.uk**

2 HOPTON HALL

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ADDRESS **Hopton, Wirksworth,**
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TEL **01629 540923**
WEB **hoptonhall.co.uk**

3 IVYCROFT GARDEN

We became intrigued with snowdrops while living in Herefordshire where hundreds were planted decades ago. Philip Ballard then introduced us to some different species and we were hooked. We later developed this garden hoping for interest all year round – over 200 varieties are now spread throughout. Entry £3.50. Thursdays in February, 9am-4pm. Also by appointment.

ADDRESS **Ivington Green,**
Leominster HR6 0JN
TEL **01568 720344**
WEB **ivycroftgarden.co.uk**

4 CHIPPENHAM PARK GARDENS

Chippenham Park offers over 35 acres of woodland, lakes and formal gardens. In February, much of the walks are carpeted in snowdrops and aconites, which have naturalised themselves in vast numbers. A mass of hellebores, fiery dogwoods and exceptional trees make this a truly inspirational time to visit. Refreshments available. Open: 10am-4pm, 13-28 February, £5.

ADDRESS **Near Newmarket,**
Cambridgeshire CB7 5PT
TEL **01638 721416**
WEB **chippenhamparkgardens.co.uk**

5 WATERPERRY GARDENS

Celebrate the first signs of spring with Snowdrop Weekends at Waterperry Gardens on 20/21 and 27/28 February. The ornamental gardens will be carpeted with over 30 varieties of snowdrop. A place to explore, relax and shop in beautiful surroundings. Opening times: 10am-5pm January-March, 10am-5.30pm April-October. Party bookings welcome by arrangement.

ADDRESS **Waterperry, Near**
Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1JZ
TEL **01844 339254**
WEB **waterperrygardens.co.uk**

6 BENINGTON LORDSHIP GARDENS

Historic ruins serve as a spectacular backdrop to the naturalised snowdrops at Benington Lordship. The walled garden showcases an impressive 200 snowdrop varieties. Beautiful views over surrounding parkland and a lakeside stroll complete your visit. Snowdrops and hellebores for sale. Free parking. Open 10 February-6 March, 12-4pm. £5 entry (conc. £4 excluding Sundays).

ADDRESS **Stevenage,**
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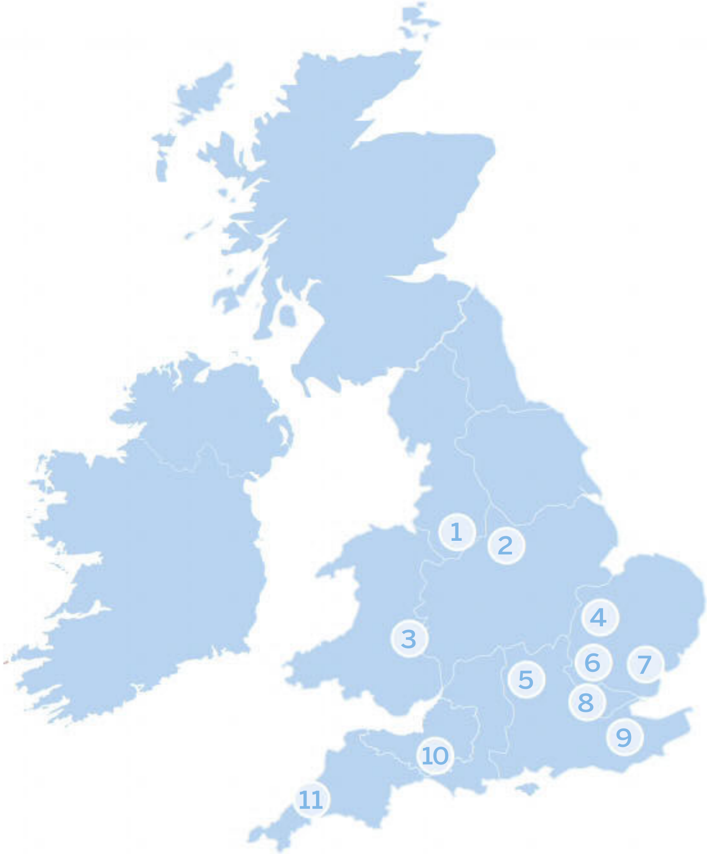
TEL **01438 869668**
WEB **beningtonlordship.co.uk**



7 GREEN ISLAND GARDENS

Set among 20 acres of woodland, the gardens in February display a host of scented winter flowering shrubs among the carpets of snowdrops, cyclamen and hellebores. A large collection of hamamelis, daphnes, viburnums, loniceras, sarcococcas, and chimonanthus fill the air with sweet-smelling perfumes.

ADDRESS **Park Road,**
Ardleigh, Essex CO7 7SP
TEL **01206 230455**
WEB **greenislandgardens.co.uk**

8 MYDDELTON HOUSE GARDENS

Discover the breath-taking display of snowdrops as you delve into eight acres of enchanting grounds at Myddelton House Gardens, created by one of Britain's most famous self-taught gardeners – Edward Augustus Bowles. Enjoy hot and cold refreshments at the Bowles Tea Room. Entry to the gardens is free and is open daily from 10am.

ADDRESS **Bulls Cross,**
Enfield, Middlesex EN2 9HG
TEL **03000 030 610**
WEB **visitleevalley.org.uk/gardens**

9 HEVER CASTLE & GARDENS

Follow a snowdrop trail through the grounds of Hever Castle, once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, and enjoy the early blossoms of camellia and quince in the award-winning gardens. Meander along the paths for fabulous snowdrop displays and enjoy blankets of these delicate flowers alongside the double moat that surrounds the 700-year-old castle.

ADDRESS **Hever,**
Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG
TEL **01732 865224**
WEB **hevercastle.co.uk**

10 FORDE ABBEY & GARDENS

Within Forde Abbey's 30 acres of award-winning gardens, there is something to gladden the eye all year round. Our renowned snowdrops – Wordsworth's 'venturous harbinger of spring' line the drive and cover the lawns throughout February, and galanthophiles may spot unusual varieties in the Rock Garden. Gardens open daily, 10am to 4.30pm (last admission).

ADDRESS **Chard,**
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TEL **01460 221290**
WEB **fordeabbey.co.uk**

11 THE LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN

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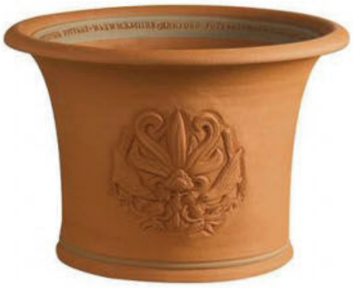

WHICHFORD POTTERY

Inspired by William Morris' Strawberry Thief textile design, this flowerpot (26cm x 37cm) is handmade in Warwickshire and guaranteed frostproof for ten years. Free delivery to mainland UK (saving £29.50). £59.50 each or £99 for a pair, delivered to one address. T&Cs apply. Offer ends 29/02/16. Phone to order.

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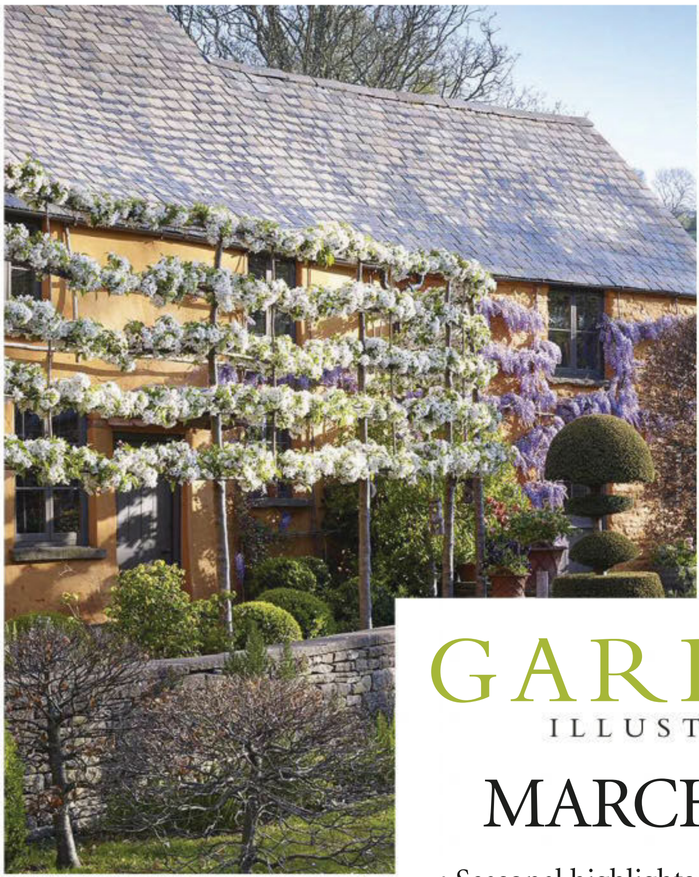

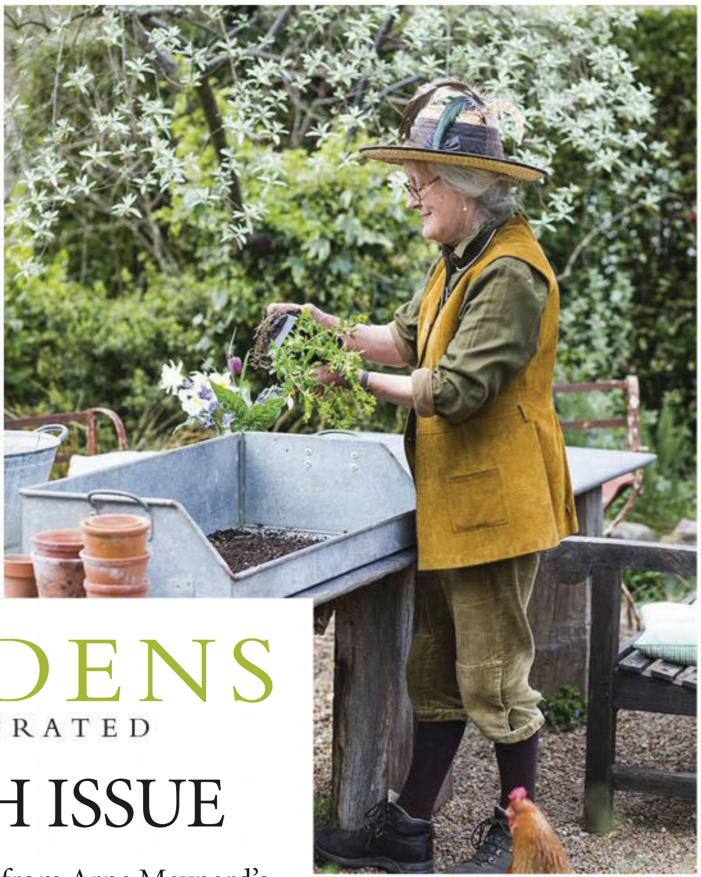

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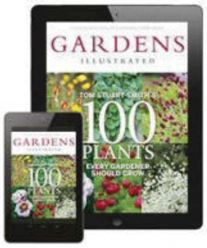
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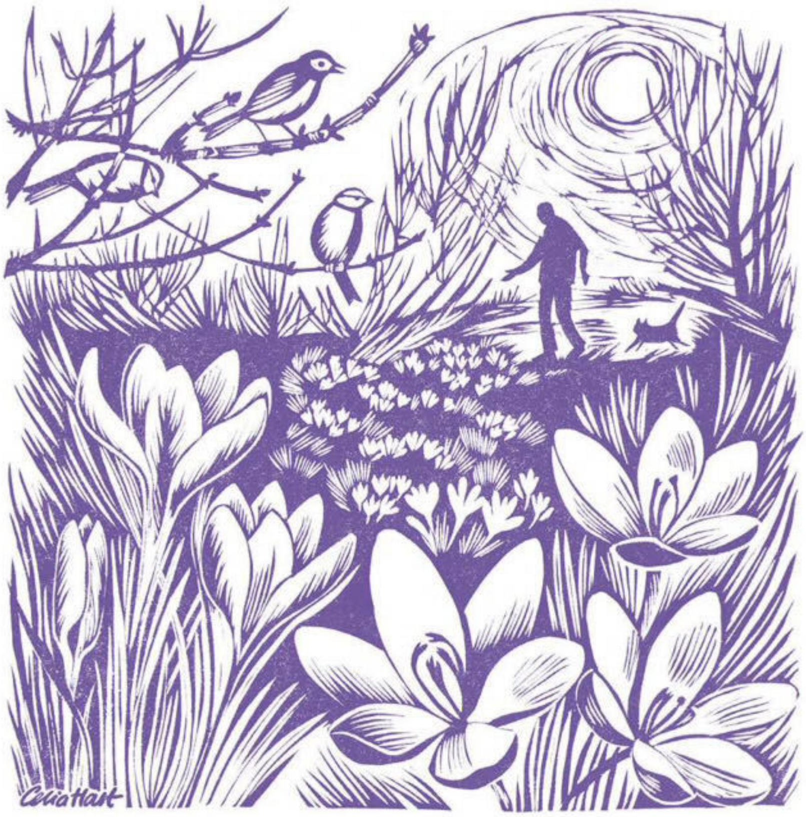
Brief encounter

Frank eagerly awaits the fleeting pleasures offered by the year's shortest month

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**



Any minute now, you think, there will be a crocus. More often than not you will be waiting until March, but you can't help looking. I always loved this month of expectation in my childhood in Ireland, when February was the month that winter softened and the bottoms of ditches turned to living green. Here, in England, it is a harsher month by far, and for a long time I mourned the Irish February. I think I stopped when Christopher Lloyd pointed out to me that it was a very short month and that the sun set a whole hour later at the end of it than it had at the beginning. We may have been looking at his crocuses at the time.

> *Other months to come will disappoint you, but February has nothing except improvement to offer*

For February is the month when you begin to go round the garden again, in expectation. For three months past you have only gone out to accomplish a thing and taken the shortest route there and back, and the thing is probably no more than to pick a bit of wintersweet for the house or unwind the Christmas lights from round the roof of the outside lavatory. In February you begin to go out for going out's sake, to look.

And besides the hope of a tight purple bud in the grass where the first crocus should be (and how much better if you remembered to mow in December), there are other jewels to look for. I love the bright red spots where hardy geraniums show themselves ready to erupt. And it is the only time when I am glad there is still a bit of unkillable ash in the hedge and you look at the buds and wonder whether they will really be blacker in March, or whether Tennyson only wrote it in a March when he hadn't noticed before. But he said the front of March and that was a colder century, so maybe we should be reading February now, and this is as black as ashbuds get.

Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

For in February, when there is so little to look at, the looking is all the greater and there is time to consider before looking for the next thing. And the sun is on your back, or you wouldn't have been drawn out to look or stopped your digging to wander. And the sun is stronger than the last time and can only wax yet. There can be euphoria in that. It is a short month and always so much better at the end than it was at the beginning. Other months to come will disappoint you, but February has nothing except improvement to offer.

And maybe crocuses. Snowdrops for certain. They are so reliable that people plan luncheon parties to view them months ahead. There are few things better than a snowdrop party, but a crocus party might be it. It would mean that on the morning of the crocuses all your friends would have to be able to drop whatever they were doing and leap in their cars at your signal: phone, email, or whatever is next, and you would be ready with the house clean to feed them all; and they would be there so quick from all over the country that the crocuses would still be rolled tight on their arrival and blowsily draped in the sunshine by their leaving.

It almost never happens that even one friend sees your crocuses in February, if you get them. You might have hoped and looked for it from the start of the month, but if and when it happens it is a surprise and will have to be a private pleasure. You might chance to have someone staying and make them come out to look, but your small rags of purple in the grass will likely mean nothing to them and they will shiver and look at the sky with bleak enthusiasm for the bit of sun there is and retreat indoors behind your shoulder. It is better, perhaps, to keep it to yourself. □

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